FOOTBALL ROUND THE WORLD

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by

TOM FINNEY
(Preston and England)

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DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER

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INTRODUCTION

By Joe Mercer
(*Arsenal and England*)

My many friends in football have repeatedly told me, especially since retiring from first-class football, that I have had all the honours it is possible to win at this glorious game of ours.

To tell the truth I was beginning to believe the tale, when along comes the invitation to write the introduction to Tommy Finney's book on football.

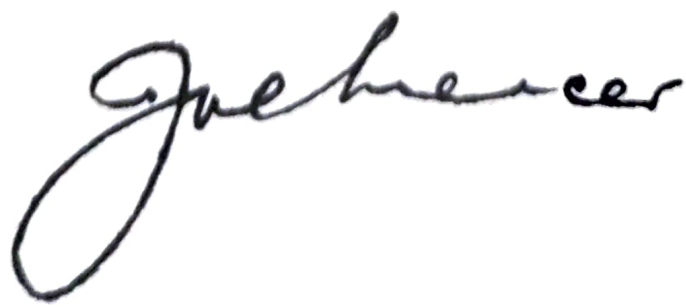
I am very conscious of this great honour, and I feel extremely privileged and proud of being given this opportunity of telling the British sporting public what we, his contemporaries, really think of the most outstanding player in the world today.

The greatest critics of footballers are footballers. Their praise is a very hard thing to come by, and is sparingly given. To measure up to their exacting demands a player must be really outstanding. Of International players of years' standing they'll say: "Yes, he's good, but so and so is missing in his make-up."

Listen to what Jimmy Murphy, right-hand man of the famous Matt Busby, Manager of Manchester United F.C., an outstanding International in his own right and reputed to be the smartest fellow in the business for picking the best players, has to say: "Tommy Finney has everything. He can play equally as well at outside left as at outside right. His dribbling compares with Stan Matthews. He shoots hard with either foot, and has the flair for scoring goals. He's more than fast, heads a ball well and you can't frighten him. Couple this with a football brain which enables him to do the right thing at the right time and you have the only player I've ever seen who has 'got' the lot." So says Jimmy, and who am I to contradict him?

Personally I have four different memories of Tom. The first when he was very young, full of promise and enthusiasm, Everton *v.* Preston at the Leyland Motors ground, where Preston played during the War. Secondly, just previous to his going abroad to Egypt, where his association with the famous Wanderers made him the football pin-up boy of the 8th Army. It was a representative game at Stoke, and he was opposing Eddie Hapgood, probably the best left back of all time. The compliment Eddie paid to this then comparatively unknown youngster was: 'He's an outside right and he does all his dribbling with his left foot; what can you do with a fellow like that?" Thirdly, was at Zurich in 1945, the Victory International against Switzerland. A different Tommy Finney, a matured, grim young man with the nervous strain of fighting against German crack troops written all over his young countenance, but with a new confidence and a determination which is one of his greatest assets. Finally, the fourth—and for me the impression my mind's eye will always retain of this great player: against the Arsenal in last season's vital League game at Preston. The complete master of every situation, the man playing with complete confidence and making an outstanding player of Lionel Smith's calibre look ordinary. On that day he was unplayable: I never hope to see a better exhibition of wing play.

Knowing what a wonderful, true, honest, and modest sportsman Tom Finney is; with a high regard for his knowledge, ability, and undoubted experience, I have the utmost pleasure in writing this brief introduction, and know that whatever he has to say about football cannot help but be instructive, interesting, and full of sound reading.



FOREWORD

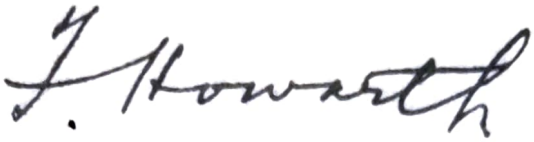
By Mr F. Howarth, O.B.E.
(*Secretary of the Football League*)

THERE are several reasons why I am delighted to write this foreword. In the first place I was instrumental in starting Tom Finney on his "representative" career. Tom was in the Army, stationed at Catterick in October 1942, and I was selecting a Football League side to play the Northern Command at York. The Army did not then know they had another football star in their ranks. I did, and selected him to play against the Northern Command on October 17, 1942.

Secondly, I have known him all his football life, and thirdly, I have travelled with him on many of the journeys described in this book. Add to this that Tom is a most modest young man, a complete sportsman and gentleman and typical of the best characteristics of a Britisher, and you will appreciate why I am so pleased to write this foreword. To accompany him on his journeys through the pages of this book, to be with him on and off the football fields all over the world is a pleasant and exciting experience. He has created an atmosphere both interesting and instructive; indeed, I found myself wanting to take out my atlas and follow his journeying. There are few details of the actual travel, whether by air, boat, or rail, and so the reader is transported on a magic carpet as it were from a football field in one country to a football field in another country or continent even. And this is as it should be: the book does not claim to be a travel book, but a book of lively interest in many places, seen through the eyes of a man who himself has been and is the centre of attraction for many many thousands throughout the world.

It is no exaggeration to say that football is played all

over the world, indeed there is a World Federation for the government of the game, and most countries are members. When, therefore, Tom Finney, one of the game's greatest players, takes up pen and writes of his Football experiences Round the World, then here is something for lovers of the game everywhere. To you therefore I commend this book.



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CHAPTER ONE

"JAMES THE SECOND"

I WAS only a spectator at the first football match I can remember—a tussle between two teams of nine-year-old schoolboys on a housing estate in Preston.

I can't remember if the match was "Preston *v.* Arsenal" or "England *v.* Scotland", but I know that my brother Joe was right half of the home team, captain of a side who had more enthusiasm than skill, more energy than power, but who were nevertheless ready to play till they dropped to keep their record of Champions of Holmeslack Back Fields.

"Back Fields", to those of you who don't know Lancashire, means that area of spare ground behind a row of houses which is used variously as Red Indian camp, desert island, and Fifth of November bonfire site —all in continuous conflict with the local gardeners, who regard the turf as theirs by right as the perfect answer for a ready-made and movable "lawn".

To the local youngsters, however, it was most often used as Deepdale—a replica of Preston North End's stadium not so far away along the town. Only a boy's imagination could have made it seem like a soccer stadium, for there were no stands, no dressing-rooms, no crowd.

Jackets were used as goal-posts, as boys use them all over the world. There were no touch-lines, except by frequently disputed "agreement", and the rules were probably a long way different from those laid down by the Football Association.

In this, the first match I can recall, I was the only spectator, simply because I was the only one too small to play. I was just four years old, not even at school, and my efforts at joining in got me nowhere. I was told: "Mind out or you'll get hurt." "Get out of the

way, you." . . . And in the next minute I'd be asked to fetch the ball as it was booted heartily out of play over the imaginary bar.

I can't remember the final score, but I think it was something like 12–9 in favour of Joe's team. That would be an average result, for those hard-going heroes did not play to a time limit. Half-time came when one side had scored six goals, and victory went to the first team to reach the dozen.

I can remember definitely, however, that this was the first time I really wanted to play football, to join with the others in this wonderful game, and to become a master at scoring goals.

I had a long way to go before anything like that happened, and the "Too small" label was to follow me around for a long time before I really set off on the road to the top. But talk of success must remind me here of the great debt I owe to Joe, and to my father.

I later played with and against my brother many times. Although I was much younger than he, our great interest in football kept us together as we grew up, and he was always there to give me help and advice. I am happy to say that we are still the best of pals, partners in a Preston business.

My father, a Preston man who worked as a clerk with the local corporation, had only one interest apart from his family—soccer. He would spend his last penny looking after his kids, and he certainly spent plenty of time encouraging us boys to play football.

In his younger days he had been something of an amateur outside left, now his enjoyment came from helping others to play. In the winter we would sit by the fire as he talked about the great games he had seen, and in the long summer evenings he worked hard trying to coach the local youngsters into teams, even forming a Holmeslack junior side which played in local leagues with fair success. But all the time, I think, he was hoping that his own boys would one day make the grade.

I was only seven years old, and hardly the height of a corner flag, when he gave me my first great help towards

making the grade. He took me to Deepdale—the real one—to see Preston in action.

We had to get there early, so that I would be able to see from a well-chosen spot on the terracing wall, but although we had almost an hour to wait before the kick-off, it was no bore to me. I was too thrilled by my surroundings. You could have put half a dozen of our back-yard pitches into one-half of the Deepdale playing arena, and the stands and terraces seemed like a new world to me.

Little did I know that one day this same stadium would become my soccer home, that I would train there throughout the week before the deserted stands and empty terraces, and that I would play there on match days before the packed, colour-splashed crowds cheering on " Proud Preston ", with me as proud as any member of the team.

As boys may shout encouragement to me now, so I did my share of cheering that day, but it was all for one man—Alex James. I can't remember who Preston were playing that day, and I have no idea of the score, for I had eyes only for James the Juggler, the little man with the long baggy pants and slicked-down hair, the player who could fool an entire defence with one flash of his twinkling feet, and whose soccer skill was surely as great as anything before or since.

The little Scot was the idol of Preston at that time, and even before I ever saw him play he was my hero, for after every match the whole town buzzed with talk of his football wizardry.

As schoolboys have a habit of identifying themselves with sporting champions, so I had identified myself with James. But after seeing him play for the first time I didn't just dream of James—I WAS James. I tried to dress like him, wearing my pants so that they flapped about my knees, pulling down the cuffs of my jersey until they covered my wrists, and slicking down my hair to match his immaculate parting.

I tried to move like him, running at the same perky trot, and I tried to play like him, practising to juggle and

feint with the ball and to body-swerve my way past defenders.

It may seem silly to look back upon now, that schoolboy's fad, but I honestly believe that my hero worship of those days had much to do with my later success. I was so keen to emulate my hero that I put in hours of practice, acquiring the first skill and confidence which every player must have before he can win a place in League football.

Of course when I first started playing in school teams there was only one position for me—inside left. That was James's position, and to my mind there couldn't be any other worth playing in.

It almost broke my heart when he was transferred to Arsenal, but to me he was still the greatest player in the world, and I kept on trying to copy him.

Even later, when I started delivering newspapers after school to help out at home, I practised on my rounds. I would dribble a tennis ball along the pavement "selling the dummy" to lamp-posts and side-footing the ball through every garden gate for a goal.

Once my round was finished I would rush home to do my school homework. Then, if there was any light left, I would be straight out to the Back Fields to join in the game that was sure to be going on there.

At school by this time I was earning a small reputation as a nippy little inside left—if not as a nippy scholar. I certainly tried hard enough, but I still had a long way to go.

CHAPTER TWO

ON THE SIDE-LINES

I WAS still a schoolboy when I won my first representative honour—reserve for the Preston Town schoolboys team who played in the All-England Schools Shield, one of the most attractive soccer competitions in the country, and certainly one of the hardest to win. Looking back, I don't suppose I have much to brag about, for I was still on the small side, and never even got a game for them.

Yet when Preston reached the final, to play West Ham boys at Upton Park, I was as thrilled as any regular member of the side. Thirteen of us—I was one of the only two not yet wearing long trousers—set off for London and the week-end of our lives. We even had supporters with us, and a dinner organised for what was hoped would be a victorious homecoming.

In London we saw all the sights and enjoyed ourselves tremendously, expending enough energy to have given a Football League trainer nightmares had he been in charge of us. But the schoolboy is tireless, and our team battled to a well-earned draw, to hold the Shield jointly with the Londoners. Although on this occasion I was only a supporter, I cheered on my side from the side-lines with all my might.

I have often been asked to name the player who has given me most trouble during my career. By their question, most people expect me to give one of Britain's top-class defenders, someone who has been wise to all my tricks and who has blocked me effectively.

Actually the player who blocked me most effectively was a forward, not a defender. His name?—Tommy Hough, the boy who kept me out of the inside-left position in that schools team, and who was later to keep me on the side-lines for match after match when we had both joined Preston.

That day was some way ahead, however, as I found when we returned home from the London trip. We had our welcome-home dinner all right, but in a way I was disappointed when I got home.

At the end of term, Preston North End had sent out invitations to all the local schools, asking any boys who fancied football as a career to apply to Deepdale for a trial. I didn't need to be asked twice. Straight away I sent off details of my height, weight, and "playing experience", but heard nothing in reply.

I was persuaded to patience by my dad, who said that the Preston management must have had hundreds of applications, and that it would take time to sort them all out and give everyone their chance. And after all, Preston had a First Division side to consider, too.

I tried to believe that this was the answer, but waiting brought no result. The postman kept passing me by. When I returned from London, however, I hoped that the success of the schools team might get me some notice, even if I had a trial and was rejected, but once again I was told I was too small. Better to wait another year and try again. I had started work as an apprentice plumber, and kept my football going by playing for Holmeslack Juniors while waiting for the time when I could apply once more.

It is true that I was no giant—only 4 ft. 9 in. in height and weighing five stone, but I was wiry enough, and I was certainly fit. I told myself that Alex James was no six-footer, yet no one said he was too small, until I remembered that he had had the same difficulty in his Scottish junior days.

I began to wonder if I would ever get my chance, but once again Dad came to my rescue. His great interest in the game had led to a friendship with Will Scott, then North End trainer, later to take over as manager. Dad put the problem to him, and Will, always a great one to encourage the youngsters, said: "Send the boy along. I'll see what I can do for him."

By this time I was doing fairly well at my job—at what was then regarded as a good wage of six shillings a week

Playing against Swansea Town at Deepdale. I feint to cut cross field—

—instead I cut down the bye-line, towards the near post.

I hit a typical cross "out", i.e. away from defenders and into the path of my own forwards to give them a better scoring chance.

(Photographs by courtesy Lancashire Evening Post)

Here I am lobbing the ball over the head of Jimmy Cowan (now with Sunderland) to score England's second goal against Scotland at Wembley in 1951. Behind me is George Young (Glasgow Rangers), the Scottish captain. Scotland won a grand game by 3 goals to 2.

—but while waiting for the evening of my trial to come around I was lucky not to be fired for day-dreaming. I must have scored a hundred goals a day in my imagination!

Down at Ashton Park for the big event we had a few words of encouragement from trainer Scott, then off we went under the ever-watchful eyes of Chairman J. I. Taylor.

I scored no goals, but when I trotted off the field at full time I was told that I had been a success—and was immediately offered a ground-staff job at £2 10s. a week, a job which would have allowed me to train and practise with the team of my dreams—and the remainder of the time I would be actually working in Deepdale.

Football was the life for me, all right. Imagine being paid—and £2 10s. a week at that—for playing a game I'd play for nothing any time.

I would have signed on the spot, but to my amazement Dad had other ideas. "Look, Tom," he said. "It's time enough for you to be thinking of playing football full time. You might be good enough now, but there's no saying that you will still be good enough five years from now. I know it will be a big disappointment to you not to take this offer, but have a trade at your finger-tips first. You'll always have that to fall back on if you are not a success at soccer, and even if you do make it you have lost nothing. You can still play as an amateur while you are working or as a part-time professional."

He must have felt strongly on the subject to have made such a speech. I felt strongly, too—I thought he was pulling my leg. And when I found out that he meant what he said I was even more annoyed, so much so that if I hadn't been so keen on the game I would probably have thought of running away to sea.

As it was, however, I agreed to play as an amateur, and went back to my six shillings a week job—a decision for which I have since had great reason to thank my father.

I don't want to give up soccer, but if I had to stop playing tomorrow, through injury or any other reason, I

would not have to worry about finding a job to keep me. After qualifying as a journeyman plumber I was able to set up in business with Joe, who had chosen to be an electrician, and together we make a reasonable living without being wholly dependent on soccer for money.

This is a point which I cannot over-emphasise to any youngster coming into the game. I am a great advocate of coaching, and of playing in first-class company as soon as possible, for it is in the early years that the foundations of success are laid. But the boy who stakes his all on soccer as a career is really taking a chance.

He may be brilliant as a schoolboy—and a football misfit unable to find a team who will have him, in his mid-twenties. And anyone trying to find work without training at that time of life has little chance of success.

Even if the boy does make the grade, and becomes a regular player in a League team, a trade or professional training will always stand him in good stead for the day when he has to retire from the game. A footballer's career is short, and the knowledge that his future is secure will free him from much worry, and will help, not hinder, his play. Ask any professional, and I'm sure he will agree with me.

Personally, I find that having a job helps my play in another way, for it prevents me from going stale through over-concentration on the game, always a danger where full-timers are concerned. But this and many other major questions were still a long way ahead of me when my dad told me to turn down the ground-staff job.

I was too busy trying to make the grade as a teen-age amateur with Preston, playing first as inside left in the Preston and District Amateur League, later moving on to the Lancashire League. I was slowly climbing the ladder, but I was a long way from the top, and the Tommy Hough snag was still with me.

CHAPTER THREE

ON THE WING—BY ACCIDENT

I AM always being asked how I became an outside right. The answer is—by accident, for I never really wanted to play on the wing at all.

My troubles as an inside left began on the day in 1938, when I was promoted to reserve in Preston's under-eighteen team, who played with great success against similar sides from Manchester United, Bolton, Stoke, Everton, and so on in mid-week matches.

It was a good competition from the club's point of view, helping in a great way to groom the youngsters for future League stardom. But for a long time it wasn't much good to me—I just couldn't get my place in the team.

Old friend Tommy Hough was again the snag. He held the regular inside-left place in the Preston side, and never have I known anyone play so consistently, or one keep so free of injury.

Game after game I would report at the ground, and then stand and watch as Tommy slowly killed my dreams of stardom. Then, when my big chance did come, I wanted to turn it down because I wasn't chosen in my favourite position.

Preston youths were due to play Manchester United, the Mujacs, as they were called, in a mid-week match. Two boys in the United line-up were later to reach the top of the soccer tree—Johnny Aston and Charlie Mitten—but there did not seem to be much hope of stardom for me as I reported for my weekly twelfth-man role as spectator.

Then came the big surprise. When I called in at the dressing-room trainer Will Scott told me to get ready "In a hurry"—I was playing. But when he told me WHERE I was playing, on the right wing, I thought it was

just a joke because I had been unable to get my place for so long.

It couldn't be anything else, for I had never been an outside right in my life, and I could no more imagine myself making a success of it than I could see myself winning the heavyweight championship of the world. It was no joke, however. Little Eddie Burke, the regular winger, had taken an ankle knock in the previous game, and was unable to turn out. I was the only available player left—so on the wing I had to go.

Before the start trainer Scott had some advice for me—advice which I have tried to follow ever since: "Look, Tom, I know that you are 'left-footed' and that you want to be a great inside forward, but you can make a go of this wing position. Be as direct as you can, try to get your crosses over clean and fast with your right foot, and have a go at goal with your left if you get the chance."

I had a go all right, for it was still a game of soccer to me, and an overdue one at that. We won 3–0, and although I scored no goals, I helped to make one, and I suppose I was a fair success.

First man I met when I came off the field was Preston chairman, Mr Jim Taylor, and his first words were: "You had better forget about being an inside forward, lad. I think the wing's the place for you. You're there from now on."

That's how it was. Like it or not, I was a winger—a positional switch which meant nothing but work for me. I had to learn the game all over again before I even began to make the grade on the touch-line, but if you love this game as I do, work is the greatest pleasure in the world.

Where before I had been practising to be a foraging footballer, a mobile inside forward working to lay on thoughtful goal chances for my team-mates, now I had to change my style almost completely. As a winger I had to build up speed—one of the first requirements for the position—I had to acquire the ability to pass a defender on the run, and the art of dropping centres near

enough to goal to give my mates scoring chances, but not so near that the goalkeepers would invariably cut them out.

Most important, I had to learn to be completely " two-footed ". An absolute essential for any footballer who hopes to reach League standard. You can't get to the top in this game if one foot is only " good for standing on ".

By natural inclination my left foot is the stronger, and I had strengthened it even more by my practice aimed at becoming an inside left. Now I had to develop power, accuracy and trickery in my right as well. Where other kids practised the piano, I went to work on football, spending hours trying to perfect the basic moves of the game. Trainer Scott helped me wonderfully, making me go through a move time and again until he was satisfied that I had it right.

But even after the regular training sessions were over I would go behind the stand and practise overtime on my own. To develop my " weak " side I used the old trick of wearing a football boot on my right foot, a soft shoe on my left, so that I would not be tempted to use it.

Then I would start, kicking the ball against the wall of the stand with my right foot, and trapping the " return pass " with the same one. After trapping, I would turn the ball, move it forward, and go through the move all over again. I repeated it thousands of times, working for hours until I felt that I could control and kick the ball equally well with either foot.

And when I could do that I started playing a private match with the stand wall, heading and kicking the ball against the boards, collecting the return—and trying to see how long I could keep it under control without letting it go " out of play ".

That poor old stand! I must have shaken it to the foundations at times, especially when I practised taking penalties. But the work was paying off. My play was becoming more polished, and, although I was still small for my age, I now had a regular place in the Preston side.

The next big step—the day I had been praying for for years—came when I was asked to sign part-time professional for Preston at the magnificent war-time wage of ten bob a week. I grabbed the chance—in January 1940—then put even more into my work in the hope of making the first-team grade one day.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BIG CHANCE

My big chance came sooner than I expected. When the 1940–41 season opened I was selected as first-team outside right, and went to Anfield for our first game against Liverpool.

The war-time regional leagues were well under way by this time, and although it was not the Football League proper, the standard of play was still worth going a long way to see. The Government had decided that soccer provided a break for war workers, Servicemen on leave, and so on, and so the game went on despite air raids and all kinds of restrictions.

You never knew who you'd be playing against in those days. What with guest players, roving Servicemen, and last-minute choices, it wasn't even certain that the match was on until the kick-off. But there were some great games, even although the programme did carry warnings about Careless Talk and advertisements for black-out curtains.

The opposition in my first game included Don Welsh, Charlton and England forward, and Stan Cullis, Wolves and England centre half—two top players who were later to become first-class managers, with Liverpool and Wolves, respectively.

They were too good for us. I made a happy start by scoring in my first game, but two goals by Cyril Done sent us home pointless.

Defeat in our first match didn't promise a very successful season—but what a triumph it turned out to be. We won the Northern Section of the war-time League, and made it a double by taking the war-time Cup.

The Cup gave me my first trip to Wembley—to play against Arsenal in the final!

I had settled down well in Preston's first team, and,

although I was playing against big "names" almost every week, I tried to play my usual game, refusing to be worried by reputations. But when I trotted out on to the Wembley pitch for the first time I had to keep running to keep my knees from knocking.

Look at the names we were up against. The Arsenal line-up was: Marks; Scott, Hapgood; Crayston, Bernard Joy, Collett; Kirchen, Len Jones, Leslie Compton, Bastin, Denis Compton.

Our own team was: Fairbrother; Gallimore, Scott; Shankly, Smith, Andy Beattie; Finney, McLaren, Dougal, Bobby Beattie, O'Donnell.

Line the two teams up together, and you'll see that my own immediate opponent was England captain Eddie Hapgood! My Wembley baptism was certainly being done in a big way. But I soon pulled myself together, remembering the dressing-room words of captain Tom Smith. "Don't worry, boys. Arsenal or no Arsenal, we can win this Cup. Let's go and do it."

The game, which has been described as a classic, started with a sensation. After only three minutes Arsenal were awarded a penalty for "hands" in a goal-mouth scramble. Big Leslie Compton, playing at centre forward instead of in his usual centre-half position, took the kick, but his rocket drive hit the foot of the post and bounced back almost to the half-way line.

This let-off inspired us to fight, we swept into attack with fast, on-the-ground football, and very soon we were a goal up.

I was lucky enough to have a hand in it, whipping past Hapgood as hard as I could go before squaring the ball knee high to McLaren. Andy did not stop to trap it, but hit a first-time hook shot which flew past Marks into the net.

We had the famous Arsenal rocking on their heels as we went out for more, but somehow, although we certainly made the chances, we just couldn't turn them into goals. We ought to have been well in front by half-time, but a typical breakaway goal by Denis Compton cancelled out all our pressure and made a replay necessary.

Hemmed in by left back Sherwood (Cardiff City) and Shortt (Plymouth Argyle) during the 1952 International against Wales which England won 5–2.

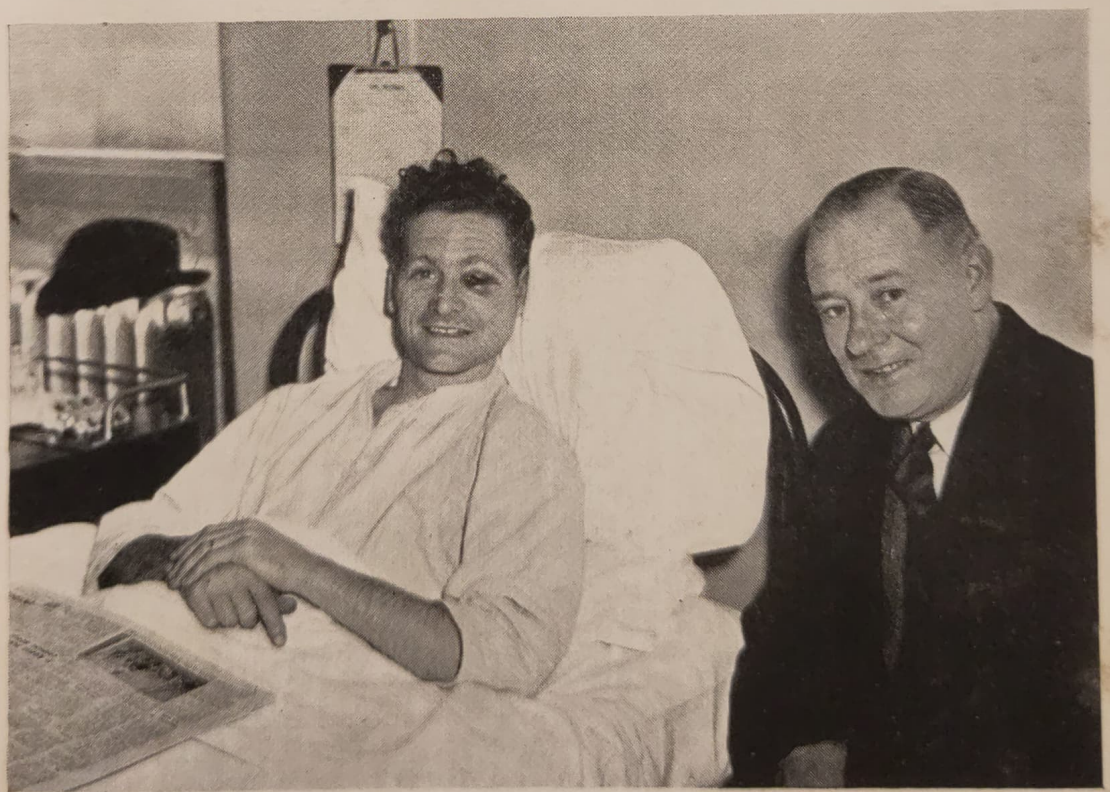
Arriving at Zurich Airport from Vienna after the match with Austria at Vienna in 1952.

Talking to Charlie Wayman, Preston's lively centre-forward, and Manager Scott after Charlie had signed for North End.

One of our players injured during the game against Italy at Florence in May, 1952. Billy Wright and Alf Ramsey in attendance.

[*Courtesy of the News-Chronicle*

Practising with W. Robertson at Deepdale. This is one of my favourite moves to beat the full back. I body swerve my way past, controlling the ball with the outside of my foot and away from the defender.



Football can give players many a hard knock. Here I am in Leicester Royal Hospital after receiving a fractured jaw in the third round F.A. Cup against Leicester in 1949.

[*Courtesy of Provincial Press Agency*

The young idea. Giving hints to my son, Brian, at Deepdale.

Myself when young. A photograph taken at a studio at Preston in 1935 after I had won my first medal.

We made no mistake the second time, at Ewood Park, Blackburn, even although the Gunners included Ted Drake at centre forward.

It was a different Arsenal in the replay, however. At Wembley we had done most of the early attacking, but at Ewood the Gunners went out for goal from the first whistle. Only some more brilliant goal-keeping by Jack Fairbrother against all-action Ted Drake, and great defensive generalling by that soccer master Andy Beattie kept them out.

Slowly Preston took command, and we went in front with a Bobby Beattie goal. Again I had a say in it. . . . Andy Beattie suddenly strode upfield in a surprise attack on the left, switched the ball across to me on the other wing. A square pass to Dougal, a flick to Bobby Beattie, and the ball was in the Arsenal net.

This goal, three minutes after half-time, virtually settled the game, for from then until the end Preston were bosses, missing chances only through trying to make doubly sure.

The Gunners countered when Frank Gallimore had the bad luck to put through his own goal following a corner, but he needn't have worried. Within a minute we were back in the lead, again through Bobby Beattie, and we stayed there until the end.

The Cup was ours, and Preston town started to celebrate as far as war conditions permitted.

It is interesting to recall that in the following season the goal-scoring feat that stands out in my memory is the one by Andy McLaren against Liverpool. The final score was Preston 6, Liverpool 1. Andy McLaren scored a double hat-trick—four of the goals in the first half—and every one of them worthy to win the match on its own.

Andy simply went "scoring daft" that day, a wonderful wind-up to a very successful season.

CHAPTER FIVE

MEET MR MATTHEWS

THE following season also produced a notable double for me—my first " transfer ", to the Army as Trooper T. Finney 7958274 of the Royal Armoured Corps, and my first meeting with the one and only Stanley Matthews.

When I was first called up, in April 1942, I had little chance of playing soccer apart from the usual kickabout games in off-duty hours. But as I was posted around the country I got my chance to " guest " for other clubs—Newcastle, Southampton, and Bolton—where I first met that great-hearted England centre forward Nat Lofthouse.

Like everyone else at that time, I had little chance of real soccer training, and often I had to work double duty to be free on the Saturday, but it was worth it—it was all invaluable experience. I would almost have paid for the chance to play, especially against the acknowledged masters of the game fate, and the Army, placed me with in those unsettled days.

Against the Northern Command at York, for instance, I played in the same Football League eleven as Raich Carter and Len Shackleton, certainly two of the best inside forwards in the soccer business. We also had keeper Sam Bartram (Charlton), and right half Ken Willingham (Huddersfield), but the Army side had their sprinkling of international caps, too. They were mostly Scots, as it happened, goal-keeper Jack Harkness (Hearts), inside right Andy Black (Hearts), inside left Hutton Bremner (Motherwell)—and a left back by name of Andy Beattie (Preston).

Yes, my opponent was my club captain, yet thanks to great work by Raich Carter and Ken Willingham we had the laugh on Andy that day. We beat Command 9–2, and every one of our forwards scored.

That match was a great rehearsal for my first big representative chance—I was chosen to play at outside right for the F.A. against the R.A.F. the following month. It may not look much of a fixture now, but look at the line-up for that classic meeting at Stoke on a grey November day in the middle of the war.

F.A.: Fairbrother (Preston); Bacuzzi (Fulham), Cook (Everton); Hall (Spurs), Cullis (Wolves), Mercer (Everton); Finney (Preston), Broome (Villa), Westcott (Wolves), Goulden (West Ham), Liddell (Liverpool).

R.A.F.: Marks (Arsenal); Hardwick (Boro), Hapgood (Arsenal); Shankly (Preston), Joy (Arsenal), Paterson (Celtic); Matthews (Stoke), Carter (Sunderland), Dodds (Blackpool), Soo (Stoke), Kirchen (Arsenal).

I could write a chapter of praise on every one of them, but I had enough worries on my mind that day. The match was at Stoke, of all places, the opposing right winger was Stanley Matthews, and once again I was up against England captain Eddie Hapgood.

There were only two uncapped players on the field, goal-keeper Jack Fairbrother and myself, but reputations or not we beat the all-star R.A.F. side 4–3 in one of the greatest games in which I have ever taken part.

It had everything—sound defences, effortless wing-half play from Mercer and Shankly, a clash of the mighty between Dodds and Cullis, brilliant inside-forward stuff from Soo and Goulden . . . and the one and only Stanley Matthews pulling out all his touch-line tricks before his home crowd for the first time in two years.

I felt that I had had a good game, but I wasn't prepared for the general claim that I was a ready-made rival to Matthews. The day when I could even begin to make that claim was a long way off, and the comparison annoyed me, as it still does.

Fans will argue for ever about the relative merits of rival players, but I dislike hearing about Stan and myself

for two very good reasons—because the Wizard and I are friends, and very good friends at that, and because we play a very different type of wing game.

Stan plays the unorthodox style to perfection, plus. With his speed, balance, body swerve, and wonderful ball control he can make the best of full-backs look like novices.

He plays mostly out near the touchline, beating man after man in a dizzy mesmerising trail before sending over inch-perfect centres for his fellow forwards to score from. He has always struck up an ideal partnership with his centre forwards—Freddie Steele at Stoke, Stan Mortensen at Blackpool, and Tommy Lawton in the all-conquering England team.

In combination with these players it took only a Matthews run, a perfectly placed centre, and the ball was in the net.

It takes more than one man to mark Stan, and defences, knowing the great danger when he is on the ball, simply have to move to him in force of numbers. But when that happens, dangerous gaps are left in defence, gaps which allow Stan's team-mates to position themselves for his goal-marked crosses.

It is a system which looks all too easy when the Wizard does it, but to my mind it is not one for the average winger to use. Unless he can first draw the defence out of position, the winger who races down the touch-line and sends over high, hopeful centres is largely wasting his time. He is playing into the hands of the defence.

Defenders, especially centre halves, are usually taller than opposing forwards, they have the great advantage of facing the ball as an attack is made, and—unless the winger has first drawn a man out of position—they have superiority of numbers, including one man, the goal-keeper, who is allowed to handle the ball.

No matter how much danger the orthodox centre may seem to cause, or the goal-mouth thrills it brings, it is very much a long shot against this defensive set-up. Think of the number of corners you see over a season, then think of the number of goals you see scored from

them. Hardly one in fifty—for the odds are all against it.

Corners give the crowd plenty to shout about, with defence and attack rising as one in a tussle for possession, but the goal-keeper usually rises above everyone else to clutch and clear. They don't lead to enough goals, and goals are gate money in this football business.

Matthews has the beating of the modern defensive set-up because he has the football ability to baffle the opposition. He isn't satisfied with beating just one man, say the full-back, but will carry on to lure the centre half out of position before placing a perfect centre just wide of the far post. With two of the opposition out of the way his team-mates have the necessary superiority of numbers, and their scoring task is made that much easier.

Stan's system certainly pays dividends, but rightly or wrongly I decided to play a different game on the wing, to use shock value, and another road to goal.

I believe that a winger should score goals as well as make them, but as I also believe that if a goal-keeper " angles " correctly it should be almost impossible for an outside man to score from his normal approaching position, I have tried to develop a technique of my own.

I shall deal more fully with my own style of play later, but, briefly, I think that much of my success on the wing is due to the fact that I play " wrong way round " . . . that I am a natural left footer playing on the right. This makes it easier for me to cut inside a defender, nearer goal, instead of out towards the touch-line, and it obviously " opens " the target area for me if I can get near enough to shoot.

If I were asked to name the chief difference between Stanley's style and my own I would say that whereas Stan seems to prefer to carry the ball along with the outside of his right foot, I use the inside of my left.

Left, right, . . . it's as simple as that.

But that old left, right reminds me that when I first met Stan, in that game at Stoke which was to start all

the arguments, I was still in the Army. I was actually on embarkation leave when the game was played, and it wasn't long before I had to put aside soccer problems for a time. I was off, in the *Queen Mary*, round the Cape to Egypt on foreign service.

CHAPTER SIX

ON FOREIGN SERVICE

ONCE aboard the good ship *Queen Mary*, it looked as though soccer, except as a barrack-room talking point, was over for me for a long time. I was posted to a camp almost underneath the Pyramids, and only two or three hundred yards away from the famous Mena House, where Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt met to talk over a bigger type of tactics than the ones I dealt in.

I was too busy learning soldiering to bother much about football. With the Desert Campaign in full swing we had plenty of supply work to do, apart from day-long manœuvres.

The only games we got were kick-about spells on make-shift sand pitches behind the billets, but after a posting to Abbassia I was asked if I would like to go to Cairo for a trial with Wanderers, that famous Services side who played for the entertainment of troops around Egypt.

As soldiers they may not have been high-ranking, but there were certainly some top-class footballers in that line-up: Mickey Fenton, Middlesbrough; Harry Clifton and Don Kelly, Newcastle; John Galloway, Rangers and Chelsea; Tommy Woodward, Bolton; Ted Swinburne, Newcastle keeper; and Willie Redpath, then a Scottish junior, later to win his cap as a wing half with Motherwell.

Although the only practice I had had was on sand pitches, I scored a hat-trick in the trial, and was asked to join the team immediately afterwards. We certainly lived up to our name of Wanderers, travelling all over Palestine and Syria playing Services sides and Egyptian national elevens.

As footballers the Egyptians are more or less normal,

but as fans they are the craziest I have ever seen—and that goes for cheer leaders, mascots, bell-ringers, and all the fun of the Cup.

They don't take rattles to a match—they take prayer-mats! Dressed in red fez and flowing white robe, the more fervid of them would squat cross-legged behind our goal. Every time their side attacked they went almost delirious with excitement, and every time we scored at the other end they would kneel on their prayer-mats, face Mecca, and pray to Allah for the equaliser.

At corner kicks the din was terrific, almost shaming the Hampden Roar for nuisance value, but when it became so bad that it began to interfere with Ted Swinburne's goal-keeping local police would come along and scare off the offenders with whips. But nothing ever kept them away for long. Like small boys raiding an orchard, they'd be back as soon as the police had turned away.

There was plenty of fun in this kind of football, but although soccer was my civilian career, I often wondered if it was right that I should go on playing while others were fighting. But every time I mentioned this officially I was told that we were doing a real job in boosting morale by giving the troops first-class football.

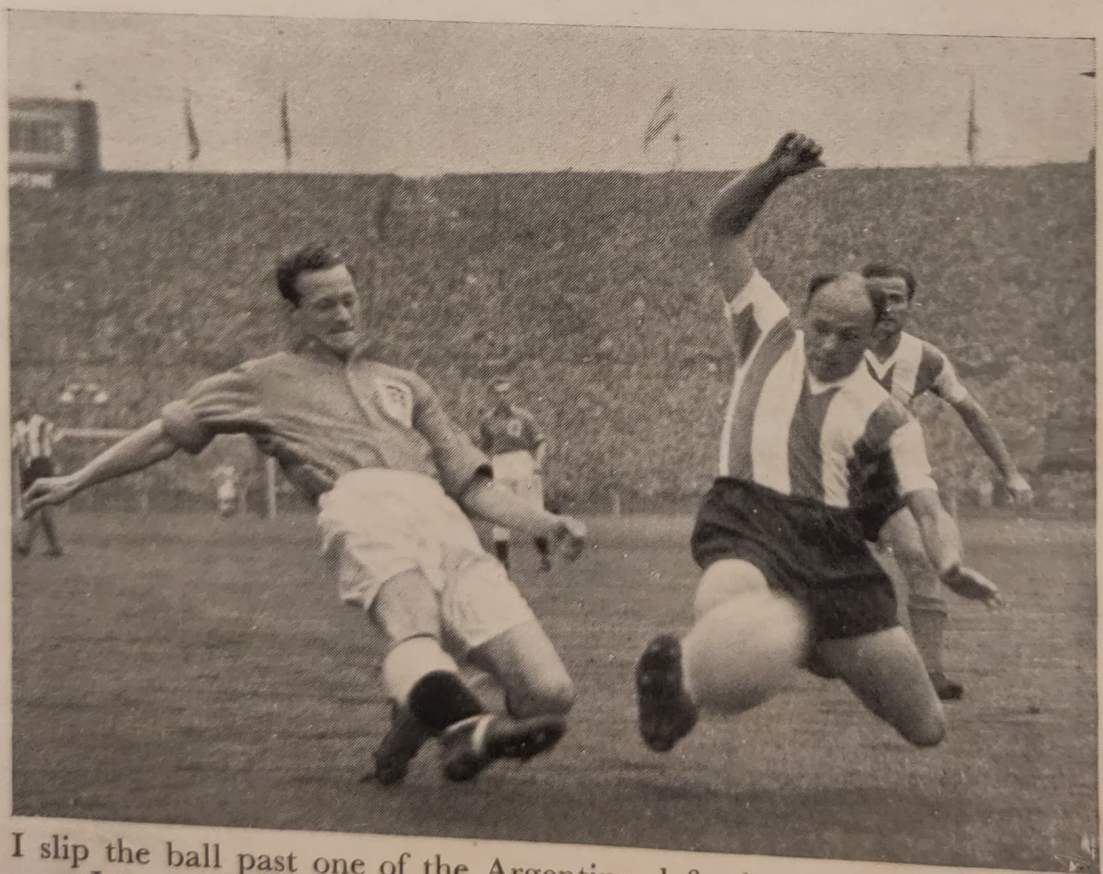
I suppose there was a lot in that argument, for the soccer interest was tremendous among Servicemen in the Middle East.

Unit and depot sides didn't go by numbers—or even regiments. They named their elevens after famous league clubs back home, and battled all the harder.

Imagine Huddersfield, Brentford, Queen of the South, Manchester City, Arsenal, Glasgow Rangers, and Millwall all playing in the same league and cup competitions. It couldn't happen here—but it did in Egypt, in the Cairo Cup and Abbassia Zone competitions.

Huddersfield, perhaps because of the great F.A. Cup record of their " parent " club, were the bosses. There was just no stopping them, and they finished on top every time. My club, Bovington United, did have one good run, beating " League " leaders Brentford 6–1 on

The Depot XI at Abbassia, Egypt, in 1944. Royal Armoured Corps.



I slip the ball past one of the Argentine defenders in the hard-fought International at Wembley in May, 1951. England won 2–1.

Eckersley, Horton, and Holt converge on me in the match against Blackburn Rovers at Deepdale in 1950. I am controlling the ball with the outside of my left foot—my favourite method when playing on the right wing.

Here I am with Billy Wright, the England Captain, and Wilf Mannion fore the match against France in 1951. We trained on the Hendon F.C. ground.

the way to the Abbassia Zone final, but all-conquering Huddersfield kept their Cup with a 3–1 victory.

We even got into the semi-final of the Cairo Cup, but Rangers slammed us 8–5, to end any hope of further giant-killing.

Those unit matches produced plenty of good football, and plenty of entertainment for the soccer-daft Servicemen, who would probably have turned up to watch football on an iceberg, never mind in the desert. But the top favourites out there were the Wanderers, the far-travelled combined Services side who'd play anywhere where there was the opposition.

I still have the schedule for one tour we made of Palestine—showing that we played thirteen matches in twenty-three days, in Jerusalem, Haifa, Beirut, Tel Aviv, and so on.

We travelled by train and lorry, resting as best we could between games, yet as soldiers we thought we were lucky—we were privileged to be allowed to play soccer. Yet I suppose if League teams were asked to do the same kind of playing and travelling now they'd go on strike.

It certainly did us no harm. In that thirteen-match tour we won eleven games, drew one and lost one, for eighty-one goals against twenty. We reached double figures three times—highest score 15–3—and my own goals tally was eighteen. On return to Abbassia I was sent on a Cook's course—which is the strangest " bonus " I ever got out of soccer.

It may seem that the opposition was all too easy, but this Services football was no back-yard stuff. There was plenty of skill, for professional players were scattered throughout the units we met, and many a man who first took soccer seriously as a break from " square-bashing " went home to make a career of the game.

Personally, I think it did me the world of good, although the war, and Army life, was by no means one long soccer match for me. The playing chances I did get, however, helped me to improve my game tremendously. Pitches were hard, of course, and at times we prayed for a good old English mud-bath of a game, but

the going speeded me up and gave me vital playing experience without which my soccer career might have come to a dead end.

One player I know who thinks this way is Willie Redpath, that very skilful Motherwell and Scotland wing half. Before he joined the Army Willie had played only junior football, but by the time he left he had been recommended to half a dozen English League clubs, Preston among them.

As it happened, he went home to Scotland on release, later won a Scottish Cup medal with Motherwell, and has given plenty of International XI's trouble with his clever, constructive play.

I was a long way from Preston all this time—in circumstances as well as in miles—but even out there North End caught up with me. Team-mate and inside-right partner Andy McLaren was posted to our area, and joined the Wanderers, an R.A.F. move we celebrated with a 4–0 win over the Egyptian F.A. at Moascar.

Later, while still seeing the world with the Army, I was to meet our club captain, Andy Beattie—but I had some Eighth Army business to get through first.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A DIFFERENT FRONT LINE

As the war moved on and the Allies rolled ahead I was posted to Foggia, on the southern tip of Italy. I was with the R.A.C. by this time, in a base depot, and once we had settled in a pal of mine, Sergeant Harry Briggs, tried to get a team together.

I don't know if he ever managed it—for I wasn't there long enough to find out. As the " team-building " talk was in progress I was told to report to the captain. I did so—and got the dressing down of my life. That officer really gave me the works about footballers dodging the column and not doing their share of soldiering.

You can't answer back very much in the Army, but I tried to tell him that I had dodged nothing, and was as ready as the next man to do my bit. He took me at my word. When I told him that the 9th Q.R. Lancers were my favourite regiment he said, " Right. You're in." That same night I was on my way to the front line—not a football front line, either—and the next day I went into action with a squadron of Honey tanks.

During the long mud-heavy months of the Eighth Army push up Italy, soccer was the last thing in my mind. But as our unit rolled to a stop on the banks of the River Po recreation slowly came back into our lives. We got boots and other gear in troop-comfort parcels from home, and as the war in Italy neared its end we were soon playing soccer again.

Andy Beattie was the man behind the Eighth Army team, a glamorous hard-fighting eleven carrying, at one time or another, enough star names for an International side.

We had Andy, himself, captain of Preston and Scotland, three other Scottish Internationals in Willie Thornton (Rangers), George Hamilton (Aberdeen),

and Ossie Collier (Manchester City). We had Sammy Earl (Bury), Frank Squires (Swansea), Charlie Adams (Leicester)—so many of them that the team lists for corps matches looked like the League line-ups back home.

Once again I had reason to be grateful to the Army for giving me the chance to play alongside such established men, and I had special reason to be grateful to Andy Beattie. If ever any one man fought to make another a star, Andy's the one for me. He helped me to become an English International, to play against his native Scotland, making nonsense of the International "needle" which is supposed to exist between the two countries. I couldn't have had a better adviser.

It was our Eighth Army playing days, too, which led to my friendship with another great Scot, Willie Thornton. Willie, one of the best centre forwards in the game, is also one of the most modest men you could meet. He won the Military Medal out there, but, although I played alongside him for weeks, I knew nothing about it until Ossie Collier made a reference to it one day. That's the kind of fellow he is. Although we have been on opposite sides of the International fence since returning home, Willie and I have kept up the partnership we first struck in the old Eighth team. Whenever I play in Scotland he invites me to stay at his home in Glasgow, an invitation I have been glad to accept, even when we have been playing against each other at Hampden.

After every Scotland–England match we spend the rest of the week-end playing it all over again, kick by kick, an Anglo-Scottish alliance which would probably amaze the thousands of partisans who make up part of every 'national crowd.

Willie is one of those centre forwards who get the best out of their wingers. With his remarkable timing, heading ability, and positional sense, he seems to mould his style to suit his wing men, thereby adding to the goal potential of the forward line.

I'll never forget one goal he scored in Italy, an opportunist score if ever there was one. I had a hand in it, but I can't claim much credit. Eighth were

playing Artillery, a name which camouflaged an almost First Division strength side composed mainly of Bolton players.

Midway through the second half I picked up a pass from Sammy Earl and moved down the wing quickly before sending over a centre intended for Willie to " nod one in ". I only half-hit it, however, and instead of it rising to drop on the far side of the goal, it never moved more than three feet above the ground.

But Thornton still got his head to it. He had been moving towards the far post, in preparation for a jumping header, but as he saw how the ball was coming across he quickly changed direction, raced into the middle, and dived full length to head the ball at terrific pace past keeper Stan Hanson.

Most centre forwards would have tried to " kill " and control the ball before trying a shot, and would probably have lost it in the process, but Thornton's quick thinking put one goal in our tally of six that day.

We had some great matches with the Eighth in those days, travelling around Northern and Southern Italy and into Austria to play other Services sides. With the war over, soccer interest was growing, and the crowds increased from hundreds to thousands.

Servicemen would do anything to see a game—they walked, hitch-hiked, ferried rivers, even formed a " brake club " in the gondolas of Venice—but somehow they got there to watch the football, which had become even more important to them than the League brand back home. And they had plenty to cheer. Apart from the number of club professionals scattered throughout the area, visiting touring sides were almost of International standard.

Greatest game of the lot was one between the Army F.A. and Central Mediterranean Forces. The team titles sound as dull as Army fatigue regulations, but what teams they really were.

The match really started with a challenge from Andy Beattie to the Army eleven, captained by Matt Busby, who were touring Greece and Italy. The challenge was

accepted, and the game went on before a roaring crowd of 30,000 at Vomero Stadium, Naples. They had something to roar about, too, when you look at the teams:

> ARMY F.A.: Swift (England and Manchester City); Bacuzzi (England and Fulham), Winter (Bolton); Britton (England and Everton), Smith (Charlton), Busby (Scotland and Liverpool); Elliott (England and West Bromwich), Martin (Aston Villa), Hunt (Brentford), Rowley (England and Manchester United), Watson (Huddersfield).
>
> C.M.F.: Purdie (Bradford City); Craig (Newcastle), Beattie (Scotland and Preston); Clarke (Fulham), Pryde (Blackburn), Collier (Scotland and Manchester City); Finney (Preston), Hamilton (Aberdeen), Thornton (Rangers), Bryn Jones (Arsenal), Strauss (Aberdeen).

There was such rivalry between the two that a neutral referee was called for—just as in International or Cup Final—and in the end we had an American, Corporal Rosner. Despite the fact that the Americans are not regarded as a soccer-minded nation, he never put a whistle wrong.

Result was a 2–2 draw, but although we didn't end the Army's unbeaten record, we certainly came close to it. We were twice in the lead, and it was not until just before the end that a Martin goal kept us from putting one across the tourists.

Two men were stand-out successes: Matt Busby, now as successful as a manager as he was as a player, gave a really brilliant display at wing half. He was almost unbeatable in defence, and it was from moves started by him that both Army goals came.

Billy Strauss was our man of the match. The South African winger, always noted for his speed, was on his top "flying" form that day, and cracked in our two goals. I was reported as having a good game, indeed I was getting quite a deal of publicity in Services papers out there, but I wasn't prepared for the great honour which was soon to come my way.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"CAPPED"—AND A TELLING OFF

I GOT a telling-off the first time I was chosen for England. After playing a Services side "somewhere in Austria" I was sound asleep in my billet when a guard woke me at three o'clock in the morning and told me to report to the duty officer.

I thought I was in trouble with the Army, so dressed as quickly as I could and hurried along to the captain's office. I certainly was in trouble when I arrived, for that commissioned gentleman really gave it to me for having spoiled his sleep.

I told him it was no fault of mine. I had reported only as I had been told to, so he handed me a telegram. It was from the F.A., asking the Army to release me to play in an "unofficial" International in Switzerland.

Not even the wrath of the captain could spoil that moment—I was playing for England . . . the boyhood dream had come true.

Incidentally that captain, Clifford Thornton, is now one of my best friends. I didn't know at the time that he came from Preston, like myself, but when my brother and I set up in business after the war we had to have an accountant. The first one we called on was Clifford Thornton, and despite that first Italian meeting, which we have laughed about many times since, we are friends in and out of business.

The telegram he handed me that night set me off on some hectic travelling. I set off immediately, escorted to the Austrian–Italian border by a rifle guard. Andy Beattie met me at the border post, and went with me to H.Q., then to Udini, where I set off for Naples. From there I flew to Croydon, landing on schedule for my first visit to England in almost three years. But there was no

time for a visit home to Preston, I was too busy getting fixed up for another trip back to Europe.

Uniforms were not allowed in Switzerland, which, of course, was neutral in the war, so the F.A. had to fix me up with clothing coupons for a civilian suit. That in itself was a joy, wearing civvies after years of khaki, and the party, which included former Wanderers team-mate Mickey Fenton, was in great spirits as we boarded the plane for Zurich, from where we went on to Berne.

But we weren't happy for long—we lost 3–1. All that travelling, and then to be beaten! True, we did beat the Swiss B side 3–0 three days later, but even that didn't entirely compensate for the first defeat.

I make no excuse for it, the Swiss were simply too good for us, yet although I have said that Army soccer helped many a player to get back into the League game on de-mob we were still a long way from the razor-keen fitness needed for Internationals.

Like almost all Continental sides, the Swiss had worked really hard for this match. " Unofficial " International or not, they went all out to boost their prestige by beating the English. They left nothing to chance. For three weeks before the match the first team, plus reserves, went through intensive training at a secret camp in the country. There they built up on good food, fresh air, and exercises, and played frequent matches against the reserve string, thereby acquiring a fitness and team-play understanding which we simply could not match.

All Continental sides approach their football seriously. From the time they are schoolboys they are coached and trained at the game. And always they are working towards one aim—International success for their country.

On later tours with the England team I found many proofs of this approach to the game, but I had other things on my mind as we made our way back to London from the Swiss trip. The first thing was leave. I managed to scrounge fourteen days, the pass being made out as we flew back over the Alps, and it was great to see home and the folks again.

I called in at Deepdale, of course, which was like a second home-coming, but it was the close season, and there was no chance of a game. When my leave was up none of the Army powers-that-be seemed to know what to do with me. I was posted to Folkestone Transit Camp and after a couple of months, just when I thought I would manage a home posting, I was given another seven days leave—before going back to Italy.

That leave coincided with the first Saturday of the 1945–46 soccer season. Preston were away to Barnsley, and I was lucky enough to get a game for my side. It was good to meet all the lads again, although obviously there were new faces in the line-up, but we celebrated the reunion by winning 5–1.

It was a hail-and-farewell match for me, however. I was off back to Italy the next week—and got another dressing down, this time from the C.O., for having been away so long. It wasn't my fault. After all, I had reported all right, but there's no point in saying that to the Army . . . it seemed I just couldn't stay out of trouble.

I rejoined my old unit, and found that there was a new job for the Eighth Army soccer team. A Sports Control Board had been set up by the C.M.F., and all the lads had been roped in as coaches. Andy Beattie and Stan Cullis were chief lecturers, and Willie Thornton Ossie Collier, Charlie Adams, George Hamilton, and I demonstrated ball control and team play. Then we'd all go out together and take the lads on at five a side to wind up the day.

We travelled around Italy with our "school", and never found any lack of volunteers. That was one course you just couldn't keep the lads away from.

We had a lot of leave to catch up, having been overseas for so long, and after a spell of this coaching I was given another pass for Preston. I went home to be married, but before that great day I was asked to play another match for North End. It was a home fixture, against Leeds, and turned out to be one of those games which make players wonder what they have to do to

please. We won 8–2, yet afterwards we were accused of poor finishing!

After the wedding, which was more nerve-wracking to me than any International has ever been, I went back to Italy for the third time, hoping that this time would be lucky and that I would get my demob. Eventually, following weeks of "sweating", it came through. I was sent home on B Release as a plumber, and I was all set to get back to League soccer for good, once I was allowed to do so under the B release regulation.

CHAPTER NINE

FULL INTERNATIONAL

League football . . . strangely, although I had played in a Cup Final against the Arsenal, had worn the white shirt of England against Switzerland, and had opposed Internationals of all the home countries in Service and representative matches, I had yet to play my first full match in the Football League proper.

The competition, of course, had been suspended in favour of the North and South tournaments at the beginning of the war, before I won my place in the Preston first team, but when I got my release from the Army normal Football League fixtures were due to commence.

The League restarted, with its promotion hopes and relegation worries in season 1946–47, and I made my debut in Preston's opening game against Leeds at Deepdale. We kicked off with a win, 3–2, and I got one of the goals to start a season which was to be full of incident for me—the start of my rivalry with Stanley Matthews.

With the season hardly a month old I was thrown in at the deep end. There had been a great deal of comment and argument in the Press that I was the natural successor to Matthews. Personally, I didn't believe it, for I'll never believe that I know too much about football, but the selectors must have decided that they would kill or prove the argument.

I was chosen for the final England trial at Nottingham, a match which was also a benefit for Willie Hall, that great inside forward who went out of the game so tragically.

I was one of the Combined Eleven, a team which read:

Middleton (Chesterfield); McCall (Notts Forest), Shimwell (Sheffield United); Baxter (Notts Forest),

Leuty (Derby), Forrest (Bolton); Finney (Preston) Brown (Notts Forest), Edwards (Villa), Rowley (Manchester United), Johnston (Notts Forest).

It looked a good enough team on paper, but our opposition was of a star studded international XI and read as follows:

Swift (Manchester City); Scott (Arsenal), Hardwick (Middlesbrough); Wright (Wolves), Cullis (Wolves), Johnson (Charlton); Matthews (Stoke), Mannion (Middlesbrough), Lawton (Chelsea), Carter (Derby), Mullen (Wolves).

But the teams didn't turn out as selected owing to injuries and I teamed with the international XI at outside right, and we managed to win the game by the odd goal.

After the match the F.A. named the England team for the two-match Irish tour at the end of September, and to my great delight I was chosen as travelling reserve, understudy to Matthews.

That was as it was meant to be, but Stan was injured in a club match on the Saturday before we were due to leave, and before I really knew what was happening I was in the England team.

But for that injury—one of many which have hindered Stan's career—I might have had to wait long enough for my place. As it was, I grabbed my chance, and the Matthews–Finney controversy flared up even higher.

Travelling over with the party, I was soon aware of the great team spirit which exists in England elevens. I was a new boy, and the others could have been doubtful of my ability, so little soccer had I played in England. Actually, they couldn't have been more friendly. With Maestro Carter talking football most of the way with Tommy Lawton, and big Frank Swift the comedian of the party, we soon settled down just like any League team on an away trip.

That spirit paid off on the field, too, for we whipped Ireland 7–2 in our first match at Windsor Park, Belfast. It was my first experience of an Irish crowd, who nearly

" went daft " as their soccer idols trotted out, led by that wonderful inside forward Peter Doherty. But when play started it was the English who went daft. Raich Carter started it with a simple goal in the first minute, and from there to the end he was the constructive genius behind our big win.

Playing alongside Carter after normal inside forwards was like driving a Rolls Royce after riding a bike for years. I didn't have to fight and worry for the ball—he laid it on a plate every time.

I got one of the seven goals, perhaps not my greatest score, but certainly the one I got the biggest kick from—my first for England! That was nothing, however, to the scoring feat of Golden Boy Wilf Mannion, who hit a hat-trick with some glorious shooting. Tommy Lawton got one, and chirpy Bobby Langton, also playing his first International, hit the other.

After our Belfast display it seemed only to be a question of " how many " as we travelled down to Dalymount Park, Dublin, to meet Eire in the second leg of our Irish double. We were never more wrong—and never more lucky to get away with victory.

It was England's first game in the south for over thirty years, and the Irishmen seemed to be determined to hand out such a goal-thrashing that we would never want to return. Right from the kick-off they went into a fast, fiery, and strong-moving type of game which completely unsettled us. We never got a chance to get going, and were never more thankful for the brilliant goal-keeping of big Frank Swift.

With eight minutes to go, and the opposition attacking all out, England broke away and I scored the winning goal. As it went into the net you could " hear " the silence from the 30,000 crowd. But they were rightly quiet, for if ever a match was " stolen " that was the one, and if ever a team deserved to win it was Eire that day in Dublin. Left back Hayes was injured early on, and had to go on the wing, but despite the handicap, they never stopped fighting.

After that display the critics, who had been wildly

enthusiastic about our triumph in Belfast, changed their tune. There were calls for drastic changes in the team, including the return of Matthews.

Although I had scored in each match, I wasn't too confident of keeping my place, for I knew the strength and value of Stan to the team. The mere mention of his name on the team sheet at that time was enough to scare the opposition.

To my surprise, however, I was named at outside right for the match against Wales at Manchester in November. I felt like an imposter, having got into the team in the first place through injury to Stan, but I was still determined to give the game all I knew.

CHAPTER TEN

MY STRUGGLE WITH MATTHEWS

THEY say the onlooker sees most of the game, but it is strange how widely spectator and player can differ in summing up a match. Press reports were none too enthusiastic over our forward display against Wales, whom we beat 3–0, yet to me it produced the finest example of inside-forward play I have ever seen, from Carter, Lawton, and Mannion. Every move they made was planned, and every plan carried danger.

I came in for my share of comment. It was said that I was victim of the England "closed shop"—that no one would give me the ball because I was a new boy, and that when I did get it I held on to it too long.

The first part of the accusation is nonsense. England didn't need wingers that day, so well did the inside trio play. And has it never been known for a man to be used as a decoy, to take up the defenders' attention while the rest of the line do the damage? Surely that is part of Matthews' success—that it takes two men to watch him, and that his team-mates have therefore more room in which to work and score.

The second criticism—that I hold on to the ball too long—is one I frequently had to answer at an earlier stage in my career. My answer is still the same: I believe in speed and striking power where possible, but if there is no obvious opening I prefer to hold the ball until a chance arises, or until I can make an opening myself by bluffing the defence into going the wrong way.

While I have the ball my team are in possession, and if the other side are marking well there is no point in me banging it hopefully towards goal, where ten to one it will be cleared, with the initiative passing to the opposition.

There is another very good reason for holding the ball,

or "stopping the game". The winger who stands with the ball at his feet refusing to make a move may annoy the spectators, but he is fighting a battle of wits, and nerves, against the full-back. Waiting unsettles the defence, who like to get rid of the ball quickly, and eventually the full back must move to tackle. Then it is up to the winger to beat his man, draw another, and get the ball over smartly to an unmarked team-mate.

I didn't have to argue like this to the England selectors following the Welsh game, but I was, after all, chosen for the next International against Holland at Huddersfield.

Draeger, the Dutch outside right, wore a hair-net in that match to keep the hair out of his eyes, but their goal-keeper Peter Kraak was worried about another kind of net—the one behind his goal. We banged in eight that day—Lawton four, Carter two, and Mannion and myself one each—in a runaway 8–2 win which looked better than it was because of the Dutchmen's poor form. They were in the middle of team-building at that time, and fielded an eleven which rarely got going as a combined force.

That was my fourth International in a row, and I had scored in three of them. With the Wembley game against Scotland next on the list the old argument kept breaking out, but before the match of the season I found myself on the opposite side to Stan.

Oddly enough, while all the talk had been going on we rarely met, but in a League match at Stoke we had plenty of opportunity to compare each other's style of play. Or at least I had. Thanks largely to Stan's play Stoke whipped us 5–0, for their biggest win of the season, and the Potteries crowd were in no doubt as to who was the better man.

When the Wembley game came along he was in and I was out. His value to the England team against Scotland in this, the biggest match of the International championship, could not be overestimated. From before the war the Scots had never been able to find an answer to him. They tried man after man at left back in an effort to stop him, but he kept on dazzling his way

Controlling and hitting the ball at full speed.

Crossing the ball across the face of the goal from the bye line.

(Photographs by courtesy of Provincial Press Agency)

"It's a goal!" Here you can see me scoring my second goal against Italy at Turin in May, 1948.

Courtesy of A. Wilkes and Son

The Preston North End XI at Birmingham in 1950.

Left to right (standing): F. Ramscar, T. Docherty, W. Cunningham, M. Newlands, J. Walton, W. Forbes, and J. Milne (trainer). *In front:* Self, K. Horton, C. Wayman, E. Quigley, A. Morrison, H. Mattinson.

A posed picture showing how to hit the ball on the turn.

(Reproduced by courtesy of the Daily Mirror)

past until he became known as the "Terror of the Scots".

It is a soccer oddity, however, that the away team have usually come out on top in these Scotland–England clashes since the war. The Hampden Roar is the loudest and most inspiring shout in soccer—a tartan-tearing avalanche of sound which is almost spine-chilling to the opposition. Yet, as the records show, it has done little to help Scotland to home victory over England recently. Similarly, when we have been regarded as certain winners—if there is such a thing in soccer—Wembley meetings have ended with the Scots on top.

It could be sheer defiance, an extra determination to win despite the disadvantage of playing before a "foreign" crowd—and any player will tell you it can be an ordeal—but actually there is a more positive reason for those away wins.

Hampden, with its wide open spaces and fast going, suits the English style of play, whereas the slower, truer Wembley turf is ideal for the close-passing Scottish game. Billy Steel has told me that if he had his choice he would play all his matches at Wembley, because he finds the pace there ideal.

He was certainly right in that 1947 match, his first for Scotland. Tiny, fair-haired Billy was all over the place that day, helping in defence, foraging with the half-backs, and having a go on his own until the English did not know where to expect him next.

The result was 1–1, but there was no doubt that England were lucky to get away with it. The Scots, long outsiders before the match, won everything but final victory—and I don't say that because I was not in the team. It was a general verdict.

There was one more International that season, against France at Highbury, and following the usual criticism of England for failing to beat Scotland changes were made. I was recalled to outside right, and Peter Kippax was named for the other wing, although he was unable to play, Bobby Langton coming in.

The French match was my first real experience of what

is often called the "Continental" style. It was shaking, to say the least. There were enough fouls for a dozen League games, jersey-pulling, ankle-tapping, and all the petty infringements which are now happily fading from Continentals' play.

We found it hard going, and it was not until the interval that we got on top. Finally, however, we won 3–0, and I managed to keep up my scoring record by bagging one.

That wound up a season which was certainly busy enough for my first one at home, but it wasn't long before I was off on more football business. I was chosen as a member of the sixteen-strong England party to visit Switzerland and Portugal.

I had done plenty of soccer travelling in the Services, of course, but the Army was never like this. From the time we left London everything was laid on—we travelled first class, stayed at the best hotels, saw all the sights and in short combined good living with hard training in the coveted way of International teams.

There was little good about the Swiss style of play, however. As reserve, I saw the first example of their "stone-walling" when they beat us 1–0 at Zurich, and when I played for the B team against Swiss B the going was rough in more ways than one. The pitch was as bumpy as a plane over the Alps, and the opposition players seemed to make up their own rules as they went along. They tugged, jostled, and tapped all the way through in an effort to keep us out. They succeeded, too, and the result, a goalless draw, was only slightly better than the first team's luck in losing at Zurich.

We had the usual pessimism thrown at us after failure, but soon we were on the way to Lisbon, to success, and to a solution to the Matthews–Finney controversy.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE LISBON STORY

Give an International team a bad name and you can bet your Cup Final ticket to a disallowed goal that they will be hailed as heroes in their very next match.

That's how it was with us on the 1947 tour. The Swiss results, plus one or two " discussions " we had had about rules in the land of the Alps and the cuckoo clock, left us less happy than we should have been as we flew to Lisbon for the first-ever International between England and Portugal. But we were soon back on top of the world.

The selectors came out with the first surprise, naming Matthews at outside right and me at outside left. For some time this move had been suggested. It was known that I was a natural left-footer, had started my career as an inside left, and from there it seemed a logical step to the left touch-line.

I have been happy to play on the left wing—I'd be happy to play anywhere for England if selected—but I am not fully in agreement with this system of playing right or left according to which foot a player is stronger on. It is absolutely necessary to be completely two-footed in first-class soccer, but the fellow who plays " wrong way round " on the wing is usually more dangerous as a goal-getter.

Like this: the natural left-footer playing on the right finds it much easier to cut in towards goal, and has a wider target to shoot at with his stronger foot. By inclination and power it opens the gate to goal to play on the " wrong " side of the field, as any first-class inside man or wing forward will tell you.

But, be that as it may, I was happy to be back in the England team. Although I had never played at outside

left in my life, the solution proved to be ideal for a long time. Stan and I were both recognised ball players and it was hoped that this experiment would bring more goals—Stan being the architect of goal making and myself as a goal-scoring winger. I must confess that at first I was naturally worried at the outcome of this experiment.

In Portugal we made our first attempt at this link-up in a game which turned out to be sensational, jam-packed with incident from the first to last. It was played in the dream soccer setting of the National Stadium at Lisbon—the finest arena I have seen anywhere in the world. The dressing-rooms and offices were as luxurious as the Ritz, the stands magnificent in white marble, and despite the baking heat, the imported Cumberland turf made for ideal playing conditions.

The fiery, colourfully dressed Portuguese turned up in their thousands to see their team put one across the English, but they were disappointed. Before the match was a minute old Tommy Lawton picked up a pass from Wilf Mannion and crashed one past goal-keeper Azevado, and from there until the end it was all England—one of our greatest wins.

Tommy Lawton scored four, Morty did the same, I got one, and Matthews took us into double figures with a solo effort just before the end. Ten–nil! We were the talk of the Continent.

Poor Portugal just couldn't do a thing about it. They changed the ball, their goal-keeper, and their right back, but they just couldn't stop the stream of goals.

The ball business was very funny. Before the game there had been the usual talk about rules between Walter Winterbottom and the Portuguese officials. After much argument it was agreed that the smaller, heavier British type of football should be used. It was—but not for long. After Lawton's first goal it was booted into the crowd and "lost". A small, lighter Continental type was brought on in its place, and that's how we finished the game.

For the record it is worth recalling the players in that

ten-goal team who made a smash hit of " The Lisbon Story ", as the game afterwards became known: Here they are: Swift; Scott, Hardwick: Wright, Franklin, Lowe; Matthews, Mortensen, Lawton, Mannion, Finney.

If that game deserves its Lisbon Story title, there was one in Brussels the following year which surely should be called " Matthews' Match ", certainly the best game I have ever seen him play.

We won 5–3, and Stan had some part in every one of our goals. Like this: One minute—from the kick-off Mannion flashed the ball out to the right, Stan raced down the wing, centred, and there was Tommy Lawton heading it home to give us another flying start.

Fourteen minutes—another Matthews cross, but this ime it was Morty who was on the spot to score with a en-yard shot.

Eighteen minutes—following a foul on Stan he took he kick himself, centred perfectly, and I got my head to it to make it three.

The Belgians didn't worry about being down 3–0. They threw everything they had into attack, and by ten minutes after the interval they had fought us back to 3–2.

We looked like losing our grip, but then, right on the hour, came another dazzle-piece from the right wing. He beat three men and centred to give me the chance of another scoring header . . . that right–left plan was working.

Three minutes later another Matthews free kick for another foul on him saw Tommy Lawton rise for one of his special headers to wind up a great display.

The English attack was much feared around this time, but if we are to look for the chief reason for this I think it lay in the greatness of the inside trio.

In the middle there was Tommy Lawton, powerful, snap-shooting, accurate with his head, and an ideal middle man for Matthews' crosses. And what inside men he had. Raich Carter, the silver-haired strolling Maestro, the fellow who could split open an entire defence with one pin-pointed pass, Golden Boy Wilf

Mannion, who never stopped working to lay on chances for his mates, and who could take chances with the best of them, when an attack was least expected, Stan Mortensen, a different type of player from the others, but a thrustful quicksilver forward whose flashing speed with shot or header can win any match.

I never like to make comparisons between players—after all I don't like it done when it concerns me—but of all the inside men I have played with, Mannion is my idea of a perfect inside partner. I don't know how Wilf feels about this, but I have found that our styles blend extremely well. He is always " grafting ", is very hard to dispossess, has a wonderful sense of position, and is a user of the ball. He will be down helping the defence one minute and up linking with his winger the next, but no matter where he is on that field you can be sure that when he makes his pass it will be perfect—on the ground and just far enough to allow his man to " run on to it ".

I was lucky enough to play alongside Wilf and the other all-stars many times, but don't run away with the idea that soccer for me consisted only of International matches and free trips to Europe. I had plenty of League business on my mind, too.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE LEAGUE

ENGLISH League football is the hardest soccer competition in the world. The luck of the draw can go a long way towards deciding the Cup, but it takes more than luck to finish on top of that championship table. It takes a good team, sound in every position, a side who can be consistently good week after week, and a club with first-class reserves ready to step in when the inevitable injury snag worries away at the framework of the team.

It takes nerve, too, for this competition has its worries for the successful eleven as well as for the one fighting against relegation. The team with eight or ten wins in a row goes around in the shadow of fear, worrying always that the next game will mean defeat—an end to the successful run, and perhaps the end of their title chances. The longer the success run lasts the worse this worry becomes—until in the end the crash comes when least expected, usually against one of the struggling tail-enders of the table.

The Cup, of course, is the fans' first choice. It has the finality and drama of the knock out, as against the skill and consistency of the points win. But it is the League, the marathon all-weather tournament, which is the real basis of the game, a basis which makes soccer the great game it is.

It is a long way from being dull, of course. The greatest club match I ever played in, one that licks even most Internationals for sheer excitement, was just another League meeting, Preston *v.* Derby at Deepdale on a damp misty day in December 1947.

There may not have been much at stake, but those two teams went out for victory as if they were fighting for the Cup and League double all in the one match.

Before North End had really settled down, Derby were two goals up. We fought back to equalise, but the County showed that they were far from finished by going into the lead 3–2. Again we equalised, but yet again Derby got their noses in front at 4–3. When we equalised for the third time at 4–4 that looked like enough goals for one day, and a fair ending to a thrill-packed game. But then, in the last few minutes, as the December mist settled over the ground Preston banged in three more to win 7–4. We were only in the lead once in that eleven-goal game, but we stayed there to take the points.

Angus Morrison scored a hat-trick as Derby centre forward that day, and yet ended on the losing side, and if that isn't the kind of game which makes football, then I don't know what is. Angus, of course, has since scored many more goals at Deepdale. He is now our outside left, and is as dangerous on the wing as he ever was in the middle.

Another game against Derby, this time at the Baseball Ground, was notable for a different reason. While play was in progress we became aware of an unusual commotion in the crowd—odd, this, but while players don't really hear the roar of the crowd, they are quick to sense any change in the atmosphere. Cause of the disturbance, we found later, was that two German prisoners of war had been found " spectating " in the crowd, and were shown off the ground. It turned out that they had been members of Dresden F.C., one of the top teams in Germany, and that they just couldn't resist the temptation to break out of camp to see a football match.

Theirs was a similar case to that of Bert Trautmann, Manchester City's brilliant goal-keeper. Bert tells the story of how, when he was stationed at a P.O.W. camp in Lancashire, he and his mates used to escape every Saturday. They would go and watch Everton, Liverpool, Bolton, or Preston—and then used their escape route to climb back into camp undetected.

In fact, Bert reckons that it was while he was still a P.O.W., when he shouldn't have been within miles of a

football ground, that he picked up many useful hints on goal-keeping by watching evergreen Ted Sagar at Everton.

Since those days Bert has certainly proved his worth with sparkling displays on grounds where he once had to wear a long overcoat as a disguise to cover the P.O.W. patches on his uniform. Now he is a favourite of the crowds wherever he plays.

On the subject of crowds—the Deepdale regulars are not easy to please, and I say that in no critical way. " Proud Preston " is a tag which follows us everywhere, and we have a difficult reputation to live up to.

From the days of the " Old Invincibles ", the Preston side who won the first double in 1889—the League without losing a match and the Cup without conceding a goal—Prestonians have expected good results, and good soccer, for their money.

The directors and management have always insisted that we try to play an attractive game, and I suppose it is the fact that so many men from north of the border have played for us that has led to the belief that we play a Scottish-style game.

We do believe in on-the-ground football, it is true, but we go more for close passing than close dribbling and holding the ball as they play the game up north. Played well, our attacking system can be attractive to watch and devastating in effect, but I am sorry to have to report that it didn't get us very far in season 1948–49—we were relegated to Division II.

I make no excuses, nor do I blame our failure on bad luck. When you are playing badly the wrong kind of luck only emphasises your position, for one of the secrets of success is the ability to overcome the bad breaks.

Relegation started one of the few transfer stories that there have been about me, for I was undecided about my future, and delayed re-signing for the following season. Don't misunderstand me. I hadn't gone all big-headed because I had played for England, nor was I a rat deserting what I thought to be a sinking ship.

Frankly, I was rather worried about my future. Due

to war service I had made very little money out of the game, and although Joe and I were getting well organised with our business outside soccer, I wasn't sure that I wouldn't be better off with a move. I thought, too, that playing in the Second Division might reduce my chances of playing for England—a thought that happily turned out to be one hundred per cent wrong.

But what man has never sat down and wondered if he is with the right firm, or if he is planning his future in the right way? That is all I was doing in the summer of 1949, although for some reason footballers are liable to be looked on as unusual, to say the least, when they start thinking of soccer as a career just like any other.

When it became known that I had not re-signed the rumours really started. Blackpool were supposed to be standing by with an open cheque, ready for the word "go", then Manchester United became favourites to get me.

Despite all the talk and "inside stories", the business did not go to half the length the public thought. I did not ask for a transfer, and Preston never asked for offers for me. What DID happen was that I put my worries frankly to our chairman, Mr James I. Taylor. He put me right on them, and I re-signed to play for Preston the following season.

I am glad that I did so, for I could not really imagine myself playing for any other club than the one I had watched and almost worshipped as a boy. From directors to fans they have treated me right, and I hope to give them many seasons of good service in return.

The story had a happy ending for me. After two seasons in the Second Division we won our way back to the top grade in 1951, winning the championship with fifty-seven points.

It was a great season for us. We went twenty games without defeat—a run which ended with a 1–0 defeat at West Ham—and just failed to beat the League record of fourteen wins in a row. Southampton were the team who broke that run, but the point we took from them in

a 3–3 draw at The Dell assured us of a place in Division 1 the following season.

The perfect ending for me came when I scored the winning goal against Hull at Deepdale to assure Preston of the Championship. As soon as the ball hit the back of the net I regretted it. . . . I wished I had had enough sense to pass the scoring chance to one of my mates, for I took so much back-slapping and hand-shaking I was almost in need of trainer Jimmy Milne to bring me round.

But I'd be glad to go through it all again, if we could only pin that Division I Championship flag above the stand at Deepdale. Last season saw us going closest to it yet, losing to Arsenal only by the decimal points of goal average, and with the title depending on the Gunners' last match of the season against Burnley.

Waiting for that result—3–2 for Arsenal—was a bigger worry than playing in any match, and the final London-to-Preston phone call which carried the news that we had been beaten on the post was a shattering disappointment.

I have a feeling, though, that we'll win that title yet before I hang up my boots.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

. . . AND THE CUP

WHAT's in the Cup that drives the soccer world so crazy? . . . If the League is the hardest competition in the world, the Cup is surely the most amazing event in any sport.

This annual spring fever makes giant-killers of unknown amateurs, inspires mediocre League line-ups to play like world-beaters, turns workaday fans into frenzied, fancy-dressed, cap-and-bells cheer leaders, and jolts the whole country into heated back-your-fancy arguments on behalf of their chosen favourites.

It's a lottery, an endurance test, and a contest of skill all rolled into one, and to collect a winner's medal is the open ambition of every player in the country.

Apart from that war-time appearance against the Arsenal, which was a big enough thrill for me, the nearest I've got to a Wembley Cup Final is a seat in the stand. But from the number of enquiries and requests I get for tickets all season, even that is a privilege.

Why is it so? Why the mad rush and enthusiasm? It is because there are no real second chances in the Cup. It's an all-in, run-or-not tournament, a grab-a-goal-and-keep-it competition which annually makes a mockery of that soccer imponderable called form, an unknown quantity at the best of times.

In the League, class is bound to tell in the end, but class in the Cup is liable to find itself dumped on the side-lines, waiting for another year and another chance after a ninety-minute thriller against a hard-fighting team from " nowhere ".

At Preston we are still waiting, and working for our first post-war success. Two or three times we have looked like pulling it off, but so far we have only been a stepping-stone for the eventual winners.

In 1947 we started off with an uninspiring 2–1 win over Northampton, but soon everyone in Preston was making plans for the trip to Wembley. The draw for the fourth round paired us with Barnsley, one of the greatest Cup-fighting teams in the land, and set the stage for one of the strangest matches I have played in.

Conditions were at their winter worst, slush on top of a frost-bound pitch, and at half-time it was still anyone's game. We had missed chances, but so had Barnsley, and the 0–0 score was fair enough. Then came the avalanche. When I scored from a McIntosh pass just after the interval I thought that would be enough to see us through to the next round, but we added five more to register one of our best-ever wins, one that convinced our fans we had the skill, power, and stamina necessary for final success.

Following this we made the trip to Sheffield to play Wednesday, but our journey wasn't really necessary. After staying overnight in Manchester, then being delayed on the road by snowdrifts, we arrived in Sheffield to find that the game had been called off because of frost on top of the snow-cleared pitch.

This, you will remember, was the bitter winter of 1947, and it was twelve days later before the Arctic weather eased sufficiently for us to play our postponed tie at Hillsbrough. I was only a spectator this time, having to stand down following an injury in a League match against Blackpool, but I was as happy as any fan to see North End win 2–0 for a place in the last eight.

We were drawn to meet Charlton at The Valley—a match which started arguments which still flare up in Preston every time Cup season comes around. You will never convince North End players or fans that the ball was not over the line and out of play before left half Revell centred, for Hurst to score the winning goal. We protested as one man, but, like that similar but more famous goal of Newcastle's which won the trophy for them against Arsenal in 1932, the score stood, and we had to sit back and watch while Charlton went on to beat Burnley 1–0 in the final.

Incidents like that will always be argued over, because so much depends on them. There are as many, if not more, disputed decisions in League matches, but luck in the League usually averages itself out over the season. In the Cup one bad break can mean the knock-out, which seems to make a first-class reason for not deciding on refereeing as a career!

The following season, 1948, was definitely an "away" year for us. Again we got into the last eight, but this time without playing a single match at Deepdale. We beat Millwall 2–1, Portsmouth 3–1—a match in which I made one of my few switches to centre forward—Manchester City 1–0, then the trip back to Manchester to play all-conquering United.

Due to war damage to their ground at Old Trafford, United were still using Maine Road as their home ground, and our meeting with them meant our third visit in three weeks to that venue.

We had beaten City in the Cup, and drawn 1–1 with United in a League match, but our third trip was unlucky. United beat us 4–1, and again we had to watch as our conquerors went on to win the trophy. Not that United's match with Blackpool wasn't worth watching. It is still spoken of as the greatest final since the war, a football feast in which United, twice in arrears, proved their power and great footballing ability by hitting back to win 4–2.

Since that year we at Preston have been a long way from success. In 1949 Leicester knocked us out in the fourth round—the first time in years that North End had made their exit so early in the competition—but I'll remember the match for another reason. I was knocked out myself.

In going up for a header I was accidentally butted in the face and went out cold. I woke up in the dressing-room with ambulance men working over me, but returned to try to save the game. I didn't succeed, and after the match an X-ray showed that my left jawbone had been broken.

I spent the week-end in the local infirmary, and was

out of the game for weeks, sporting a black eye which would have put even a prize fighter to shame, and which can be seen in one of the photographs reproduced in this book.

The next season was even more disastrous, for we were on the wrong end of a giant-killing act. We could only draw 2–2 with Watford in our third-round tie at Vicarage Road, and took the k.o. by 1–0 in the following Wednesday's replay at Deepdale.

Those spells come to every team, usually when least expected, but I did think that last season might have been Preston's year. After a shaky patch early in the season we found a blend which seemed sure to take us to success.

We had a tough third-round draw, against Billy Wright and his Wolves, but we won 5–2. Charlie Wayman scoring a hat-trick—a win which made our hopes even stronger.

They didn't last long, however. Spurs were our next opponents, again at Deepdale. We had the edge in a game played during an icy gale which made accurate ball control almost impossible, but we just could not find a match winner, and had to make the long trip to Tottenham for the replay—a game which stands out for me because of the greatest goal I DIDN'T score.

With Spurs in the lead 1–0 we made a desperate fight for the equaliser. When I got my head to a Morrison cross I was sure it was the one, but that ball did everything but go into the net.

With Ted Ditchburn out of position for once, it hit the foot of the post, screwed along the goal-line—did everything but the Indian Rope Trick. But it wasn't a scorer, and when that kind don't count you can give up.

There will always be another year, and perhaps it will be our turn next time.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CHAMPIONS OF BRITAIN

THE International Championship, the annual struggle for the title of Champions of Britain, must be the smallest league in soccer—and just about the most important one.

With its miniature " table ", in which every match is a struggle for national prestige, and the wealth of soccer talent at the command of each of the four countries, meetings in this tournament should provide classic matches.

It doesn't always turn out like that, however. I am not suggesting that they lack crowd appeal, but because of the greatness of the occasion, which places the emphasis on speed and striking power, and the fact that the teams can easily cancel each other out, so well matched are they, the soccer isn't always as sparkling as it might be.

England never lacks support at these clashes, but it is a strange point that while most Englishmen, if given the choice, would rather see a Cup Final than an International, the Scots, Welsh, and Irish plump for the inter-country meeting every time.

Especially the Scots, who seem to live for the sole purpose of beating England; and the England–Scotland match, the clash of the " old enemies ", is, of course, the highlight of the season.

Over the years their rivalry never dies. If anything, it grows stronger, and to be selected for this match is to win the most highly prized of all caps.

I have been tremendously proud to play in several, and I am prouder still because it was in one of them that I scored the goal I consider to be the best of my career.

It was an occasion which took me back to my soccer

[*Courtesy of Provincial Newspapers Ltd.*

A penalty kick which I took against Liverpool being saved by Ashcroft, August 1952. Billy Liddell, the Liverpool outside-left whom I admire, missed a penalty at the same match.

Posed pictures showing why I can play on either wing.
I cross the ball with my right foot— —And a practice centre with my left.

[*Courtesy of Provincial Press Agency*

Here I am being pursued by McMichael during the International against Ireland at Maine Road, Manchester, in 1949. I am controlling the ball with the inside of my right foot.

days in the desert—but first to the game itself, at Hampden Park, Glasgow, in April 1948. The Scots, inspired perhaps by that tremendous Hampden Roar, attacked all out right from the start. They had us busy defending, but somehow the goals did not materialise.

Then came my chance, a goal which typifies the simplicity and striking power needed for present-day football. Frank Swift was the man who really started it. Although he had been under pressure in the English goal, Frank never lost an opportunity to turn defence into attack.

That's how it was this time. As a Scottish raid ended he placed a long kick to Tommy Lawton, standing in the centre circle in his own half. Tommy flicked it to Stan Pearson at inside left, and he, in turn, pushed it out to me on the left wing, but on the inside of Govan, the Scottish right back.

It was really Govan's ball, but perhaps he had a little too much time to decide what to do with it. As he moved he glanced over his shoulder, obviously intending to pass back to his goal-keeper, but he lost a vital second in turning—a second which gave me my chance. I nipped past him on the inside, ran the ball three or four paces, then, as big George Young came across to challenge, I hit a left-foot shot from the angle of the penalty box and saw it fly high into the net past Ian Black.

That score, which made nothing of all the Scottish pressure, came just before half-time, a vital time to get a goal in any match, and although the Scots tried hard to pull the game out of the fire, Morty hit another goal from a Lawton pass in the second half to ensure us victory.

The sequel came when I returned to Preston after the game—in the shape of a letter of congratulation from Lord Montgomery, who had met the teams before the kick-off, and who, of course, had been my commander, many times removed, during the Middle East and Italian campaigns.

The letter read :

" My Dear Finney.

" I was delighted to meet you at Glasgow yesterday, and especially to see you score England's first goal. May you score many more.

" I send you my programme of the match which I have signed. Also a photograph you may care to have.

" Montgomery of Alamein.
" Field Marshal."

Monty never forgets. When I was presented to him again, before the Austrian match of our 1952 tour, his greeting was: " The last time we met was at Hampden, wasn't it? Let's hope you get another goal or two today."

But if that Hampden goal of mine earned congratulations, I wonder what he would have said had he seen Harold Hassall's wonder effort against the Scots in the 1951 match at Wembley which we lost 3–2.

The game was a tragedy for England. After only twenty minutes Wilf Mannion was taken to hospital with a broken cheek-bone, an incident which is strongly argued as a case for substitutes in big matches. It was a bad blow for us, but Hassall's goal inspired us to put up a terrific fight although we were a man short.

In the forcibly reorganised team Harold was playing a one-man left wing when Stan Mortensen, who always seems to be among the goals no matter where he plays, sent up a perfect through pass. From twenty yards out Harold moved and hit it almost in the one movement, and the ball simply flew past Jimmy Cowan, before he knew what was happening.

But it is not only Scottish games which provide the thrills. Ireland, on their own green turf, can give as good as they get most of the time, especially under the brilliant generalship of the one and only Peter Doherty, while Wales, in any match I have played against them, have more than deserved their " Red Dragons " tag.

For such a small country they have produced some brilliant players in the last few years: Ivor Allchurch,

a dream of an inside forward; Trevor Ford, the centre halves' nightmare because of his non-stop, all-action style; John Charles and Ray Daniel, two of the best centre halves in the game; Wally Barnes, a classy full back if ever there was one; and Ronnie Burgess, surely one of the finest wing halves who have ever played.

I aim no criticism at Billy Wright, skilful player and great captain that he is, but of all the wing halves I have played with, Ronnie is my ideal choice. As with my reasons for preferring Wilf Mannion as an inside partner, so I would choose Burgess to complete the triangle—because he suits my style of play.

No matter how hard pressed he is, he always tries to "use" the ball, and on attack he is masterful, either rolling perfect passes to his forwards or going through on his own for a surprise go at goal.

I remember one game, however, in which we put it across Ronnie and his Dragons—the 1948 international at Villa Park. And we did it with only ten men. After twenty-five minutes, during which Wales had done most of the attacking, our right back Laurie Scott was carried off with a knee injury and did not return.

Loss of a key player can make or break a team. With us it worked the right way. As so often happens, the ten who were left fought twice as hard as usual. We took command of the game, and I hit a fortieth-minute goal—from a Matthews–Milburn move—for victory.

Welsh fervour and fight is a soccer byword, but among all the others there is one match which, to me, typifies their famous spirit. It was their first visit to Wembley, in 1952, and, although we won 5–2, I have never seen a man try as hard as Trevor Ford did that day.

Trevor is the type of fellow who never stops trying, no matter the odds, but when he pulls on the red jersey of Wales he seems to go twice as hard again. He got both his side's goals that day, and even when the score had mounted and his colleagues had faded under pressure he was still going to the last minute.

But this isn't merely a chronicle of English wins over Wales' pluck. The men from the valleys have shaken us many times, notably when they did everything but beat us at Cardiff in October 1951, a game we were lucky to draw 1–1.

It was only soccer justice, however, that the point the took from that game should set them at the head of tl International table in their jubilee year.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

"MORTY" FOR GOALS

If it's goals you're after Stan Mortensen's your man. Morty, of Blackpool and England, has a deserved reputation as one of the finest goal-getters in English post-war football. A snapper-up of half-chances and a quick-time scorer with either head or foot, his danger lies in his quicksilver speed rather than studied ball control.

Yet in any list of "greats" from me Stan takes pride of place for the finest solo goal I have ever seen. The match was England *v.* Sweden. The place, Highbury in 1948.

Moving smoothly from the start—it is one of England's strong points this ability to go straight into top gear—we built up a 3–0 lead. The Swedes, always brilliant footballers, were not dismayed. Slowly they got on top of their game, worked hard at a defensive system aimed at cutting out Bobby Langton and me on the wings, and it wasn't long before they had pulled the score up to 3–2.

There is nothing so demoralising as to see a big lead dwindling away, and we looked like having a worrying time of it—until Stan, who had already scored twice, came bang back into the picture.

Grabbing the ball on the half-way line, he set out straight for goal. By sheer pace and body swerve he whipped his way past three Swedish defenders before they knew he was there, and then, from twenty yards, he hit a raging shot—a goal all the way—to complete his hat trick and take England out of danger.

Morty also figured in the International match which I rate as the finest performance of football turned in by any team I have been in—the 1948 England–Italy meeting at Turin.

The Italians had a "wonder team" at that time.

They made no secret of the fact that they were out to give us the hiding of our lives, and 80,000 of their countrymen turned up to see the execution.

Before the match was five minutes old we wondered if they weren't right. They had terrific speed, perfect ball control, and a baffling interchanging style which seemed certain to swamp us. Big Frank Swift, captain that day, was the man who kept them out. They threw everything but the stand roof at him, but they still could not score.

We had only two attacks in that desperate, gruelling first half, but each of them brought a goal. First Morty picked up a Matthews pass to crash one past Italian keeper Bagigalupo. Then Morty again. He ran half the length of the field before screwing the ball across for Tommy Lawton to make it two.

You could call us lucky to be in front at half-time, for the Italians had had almost all the play. Yet despite their chances they had failed to score, whereas we had made the most of ours.

They came out like champions again, but mid-way through the second half I got two goals in three minutes —one from a Mannion pass the other from Mortensen— and after that the fight went out of them.

That 4–0 score looked good, but personally I hope I never have a harder match.

It doesn't always work out as well as that, however. Our 1949 trip to Scandinavia got us enough criticism to last us a lifetime—this time for failing to take our chances. We started off against Sweden in Stockholm, the Venice of the North.

The Swedes, beaten at Highbury the previous year, had in the meantime won the soccer championship at the London Olympic Games. They had lost the famous brothers Nordahl to Italy, but they still had the framework of that Olympic team, and they were all out to avenge their previous defeat by us.

They did it, too, by 3–1, playing a fast, interchanging, hard-shooting type of soccer to which we just had no answer. But the greatest irony of all was that they were

coached by an Englishman, George Raynor, former Aldershot winger, who went to Stockholm to become Swedish national coach.

He had great material to work with, for the Swedes take their soccer seriously. From the youngest schools teams everything is aimed at national success. They will work like slaves to perfect their style, and, after Austria, they are probably the hardest to beat of all Continental sides.

Following that Stockholm defeat we went on to Norway, won 4–1, but were again attacked because we had not made the most of our chances.

The truth is that the England team was re-forming at that time. Frank Swift and Tommy Lawton had both signalled their retirement from the International arena after long and glorious careers, and the inside-forward positions were also undergoing change. But in Paris for the last game of that 1949 tour we got some of our own back, proving that we were by no means a spent force.

We lost a goal after only thirty seconds, but it only needled us into the action we needed. We hit back with three to wind up the tour successfully.

One other tour stands out a mile for me—the 1950 visit to Portugal and Belgium as a warm-up for the World Cup—for it was in this game in Lisbon that I hit my best-ever goal form for England. On our last visit to that lovely Lisbon stadium we had won 10–0, but it wasn't so easy this time. The Portuguese had been promised a trip to Rio to play in the World Cup if they beat us, and they put up a terrific fight.

We started well enough. In the fourth minute I was brought down in the penalty area, took the kick myself, and scored. Eleven minutes later Morty hit a smasher from a Mannion pass, and before half-time I had made it three with the goal-keeper out of position.

The Portuguese came out for the second half with their sleeves rolled up. Inside three minutes they pulled one goal back, and, although I cancelled it out with my own third and England's fourth, it wasn't long before they had drawn up to 4–3.

With the home crowd yelling in their version of the Hampden Roar, we were having a tough time of it holding on to our lead. Then, in a breakaway Morty was bowled over in the area. The Italian referee pointed to the penalty spot—and immediately there was uproar. Hats, cushions, oranges, lemonade bottles all went up in the air as the home fans demonstrated against the decision.

There was no doubt that it was a penalty, and there was no doubt that I just had to score as I took my second spot kick of the day. I pushed it past goal-keeper Ernesto for my own fourth goal, England's fifth—and the Portuguese missed their Rio trip after all.

But talking of tours and foreign sides, let me give you a tip. If you ever go to Southern Ireland don't try and claim that England have never been beaten at home by any team other than from the home countries.

Eire may not be Continental, but they definitely regard themselves as "outsiders". And there's the little matter of a 2–0 shock win they put over on us at Goodison Park on September 21, 1949. It was supposed to be a walk over for England, possibly a double-figures win, but it didn't work out that way, which is worth remembering if you should cross the sea to Ireland for an off-the-ration steak or two.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE ROAD TO RIO

Of all the hubbub and hysteria in the soccer of this century the 1950 World Cup competition surely takes the gold medal for shock value. England's probable part in it was talked about for months beforehand, and will be remembered as a disappointment for years.

The tournament really started with the 1949–50 International Championship, which was supposed to decide which two home countries would see their names go into the Rio hat. But when the England–Scotland match came around at Hampden the stage was set for a match which was a decider in itself.

The countries were level in points. We had beaten Ireland 9–2 and Wales 4–1, and the Scots had done the same trick by 8–2 and 2–0. The "old enemies" therefore qualified to take the South American trip together, but the Scots decided that they would go to Rio only as British champions—they had to beat us at Hampden or stay at home.

And at home they stayed, thanks to some grand goalkeeping by Bert Williams. The Scots tried every move in their locker, but they just couldn't score. Bert was beaten once, when a Willie Bauld shot hit the bar, flashed down to bounce just outside the goal-line, and was cleared—an effort which had the Scots saying that a couple of inches denied them a football journey of eleven thousand miles.

Though they had most of the pressure, we carried more danger and punch, and a Roy Bentley goal from a Langton pass earned us the title of British champions, and set us on the Road to Rio.

As a warm-up we made a quick Continental tour, beating Portugal 5–3 and Belgium 5–2. Then back to

London for selection of the final twenty-one-man playing party, and a preliminary training get-together on Dulwich Hamlet's ground.

We had a great send-off from London, and a wonderful welcome in Rio, but right from the first moment of arrival in the land of the Sugarloaf Mountain we knew that we were soccer "guinea-pigs"—everyone was out to beat the English, to see the masters humbled. And they did!

Carnival is the word most used to describe anything South American, but for us it almost turned out to be a Carnival of Tears as we failed to survive the preliminary round. We had no complaints about the food, comfort, or playing conditions. We were beaten by the Atmosphere, so rarified that we had to use oxygen as a half-time reviver, and by the Latin-American "atmospherics", volatile excitable conditions which really proved to us how far away from home we were.

We had the first taste of what to expect a few days after arrival, when we went to the magnificent 200,000-seater stadium to watch the opening game of the series—Brazil *v.* Mexico, won 4–0 by the home side.

Wembley was never like this!

Police take no chances with the crowds out there. A concrete moat surrounds the players' pitch, to keep out over-enthusiastic fans, and the players come out through a long underground passage leading to a steel trap-door almost on the touch-line.

The crowds are never quiet for a moment. All through each game they let off streams of firecrackers, to add punch to their cheers, and when the home side scores, the din makes a Wembley shout seem like a whisper in the dark. Even the spectators have to be treated for injuries out there. Apart from first-class dressing-room equipment to take care of the players' hurts, they have a special "casualty station" for the fans.

In the Brazil–Sweden match, which the home side won 7–1, fifty-three spectators had to receive medical attention, twenty-eight of them requiring injections to

calm their nerves. And this was apart from the usual fainting cases.

The players are almost as excitable. Before that first Brazil–Mexico match the home men paraded the running track, bowing to sections of the crowd, as they waited for the line-up.

They didn't look like footballers, wearing soft, short-ankled boots and dispensing with shin guards, but they were remarkably fast and skilful. Yet even after the parade the game is not ready to start. While the preliminaries go on photographers and reporters swarm on to the field, radio announcers with walkie-talkie sets interview the players as they have the usual kick about, and everything is set only when this horde has been cleared from the arena.

We had our own share of all this excitement the following day, when we turned up at the stadium, on business this time, to meet Chile, who, incidentally, had that very fine player George Robledo, formerly of Newcastle, at centre forward.

We found it difficult going at times—the lack of the "obstruction" rule didn't exactly work to our advantage—but we got through by two goals to nil, Stan Mortensen and Wilf Mannion being the scorers.

Afterwards we came in for some criticism for lack of shooting power, a point that was to be proved only too well in our next match.

Our 1–0 defeat by the United States has been called the football sensation of the century. No one, not even those who were there, could believe it, but it was all too true.

We had to travel 300 miles inland, to Belo Horizonte, to play the match—a journey which wasn't really necessary as far as we were concerned, ending as it did in defeat by a nation who regard soccer as only a very minor sport.

We started off well enough, but although we did most of the attacking, the goals just would not come. America broke through to score in the thirty-eighth minute, and from there on we were in trouble.

Desperate to score, we were probably too worried to make sure, and all our efforts missed the target. The Yanks hung on grimly, and finished in a blaze of glory, registering what was surely one of the biggest-ever upset wins in soccer.

That was bad enough, but the following Sunday brought the real k.o. Meeting Spain at Rio for the right to stay in the tournament, we played our best game of the series—but were beaten 1–0. Jackie Milburn did get the ball in the net, what seemed a perfectly good goal, but it was disallowed, and so we went out.

We fought desperately hard, but just couldn't make it. Some tough stuff by the Spaniards, some bad luck, and bad shooting, saw us out of the Cup and on the way back to England to answer for our soccer "sins".

How did it happen? It is a long story, but the main reason is the tremendous work and planning put in by foreign teams for International competition.

I can do no better than quote, in part, a statement by the Chairman of the International Selection Committee in the official F.A. publication issued following the tour:

> "It would be wrong to make excuses for the defeat of England. We were already aware that the players had had a very strenuous season of League football and that they would be faced with unaccustomed conditions of climate, grounds, crowd atmosphere, law interpretation, and the like. In most respects these handicaps were less severe than we had imagined they might be . . . but——
>
> "Unless an English team is in peak condition, on top form, and has a reasonable share of fortune, it cannot be expected to win such a tournament."

On the subject of South American football, the report continues:

> "The Brazilians' performance was impressive, their football being accurate, skilful and fast. They

are strong, but except that they are permitted to obstruct, they are correct. . . .

"Their type of game is attractive to watch, differing in many respects from that seen in this country. The most outstanding feature is the manner in which the players move rapidly into position whether they are actually playing the ball or not. Defenders run into the open space for attack, and attackers repeatedly double back for defence. They are very fit.

"It is interesting to recall that the Brazilian team had been together for four months under very strict discipline and so serious a view was taken of their entry into the World Cup Competition that other competitive football was postponed during this period.

"Enthusiasm for training, practice, and disciplined coaching is typical of football at all levels throughout the country.

"It is understood that the young Uruguayan team (who won the Cup) had been in preparation for two years. The style of play is similar to that of Brazil, and they are also very powerful in the tackle.

"There is no copyright to fitness and skill, and the resources and energy of these South American countries, where football is predominantly the national game, has set them in a strong position to challenge Britain and Europe for supremacy in competitive play. It is a situation which adds strength to the proposal, already made to the International Committee, and adopted by the F.A. Council, to set up a Technical Committee to examine the development and practice in football, its skills, tactics, and team preparation in order that this country can marshal the advantages we possess to maintain a premier place in world football. . . ."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

BACK ON TOP

It took England two years to win back her lost prestige after the Rio failure. True, we kept our home record intact against Yugoslavia, Portugal, and Argentine, but it was not until the 1952 tour of the Continent that we really climbed back on top of the soccer world.

We were due to play Italy, Austria, and Switzerland, in that order, and it was a tall order, too. With Italy and Austria struggling for supremacy on the Continent, the opposition was stronger than ever.

Foundation of our success was laid even before we left England. For the first time we had a real get-together before setting out. Together with the England B team, we gathered at Eastbourne for training, tactical talks, and a full-scale practice match against the B side. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of these few days together. Although there were no great changes in the eleven, the meeting was a freshener, ironing out snags and welding the party into a real team, as opposed to eleven star individuals.

We felt confident as we boarded the plane for Milan, and with Bill Eckersley, the comedian of the party, in great form on the way over, we were in good spirits as we touched down in Italy. From Milan we went on by train to Florence—and stepped straight into a Carnival.

The famous Festival of Flowers was in progress, the streets were a riot of flowers and rejoicing, and the whole town was given over to the pageant.

Yet the first words I heard as we stepped out of the train were straight from Lancashire. "How do, Tom. How's Preston going on?" An Italian who had worked in Preston as a prisoner of war was there with his mates to make sure we had at least some support. We needed

all we could get, for that Italian match at the Florence Stadium was just about one of the toughest I have ever played in.

We started off gloriously, Ivor Broadis scoring from a perfect Stan Pearson pass in only two minutes, but the goal only seemed to infuriate the Italians. They threw everything into attack as they went all out for the equaliser, and we were having a busy time of it when the whistle went for half-time.

During the interval a plane flew low over the ground, releasing twenty-two miniature parachutes carrying a watch for each player, but in the second half there was something other than watches flying.

The equaliser came eighteen minutes after the interval—and then the game really flared up. With all the explosive support of 80,000 excitable home fans behind them, the Italians really turned on the heat in a drive for victory. Fouls were frequent as they tried to hammer their way through, and as they determinedly stopped our own attacks.

Nat Lofthouse took a terrific buffeting, yet the crowd kept yelling at him for " fouling "—for using the perfectly legal shoulder charge in an effort to bustle his way past.

Following one charge, in which Nat himself was injured, the crowd, as eager for victory as the players themselves, really became ugly. They rose in their seats and started throwing bottles, oranges, cushions, anything they could lay their hands on.

It was only the good sense of the Italian captain, who appealed to them to stop, which ended a dangerous-looking situation. We withstood all the opposition pressure and came back into the game strongly before the finish, but neither side could find the winner. Straight away we were slated for a poor performance, and were quoted as rank outsiders for the following match against Austria in Vienna.

Now we weren't complacent after that draw, but we reckoned that we had done fairly well under difficult conditions.

The Italians made no secret of their joy at having avoided defeat. The players were fêted and showered with congratulations, and Amadei, the fellow who scored the equaliser, was made a deputy mayor of Naples for his saving goal. If we were in any doubt about the result, the Italians certainly were not.

As we set off for Rome, from where we were due to fly to Vienna, the critics labelled us the worst team ever to wear the England jersey. That hurt at first, but in the end it only made us determined to give Austria the fight of their lives.

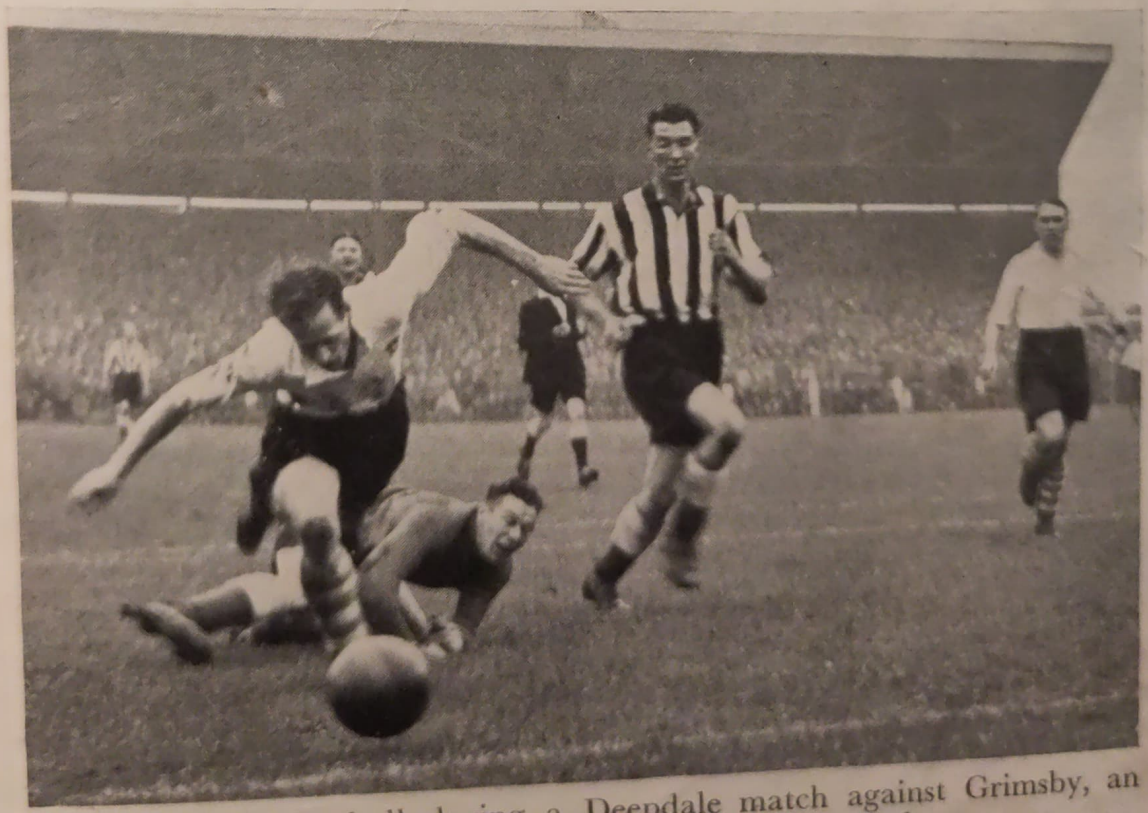
We just had to be good, for hadn't they drawn 2–2 with us at Wembley, and hadn't they whipped Scotland 4–0 in the previous year. When we arrived at our hotel we were besieged by British soldiers, pleading with us to make sure to win. Their lives simply wouldn't be worth living if we lost, so much had the Austrian fans been boasting.

That made us even more determined to win, so while all the hubbub and ballyhoo which surrounds these games went on at full pitch, we worked away quietly at our training quarters. We went into that game without a chance—and came out of it heroes. All because of a plan.

Our tactics, worked out by Walter Winterbottom, aimed at letting the Austrians beat themselves. The idea of "Operation Retreat" was to let the opposition attack down to our eighteen-yard line, where our defenders would pack the goal. Faced with a wall of defenders, the Austrians would pass and re-pass, hoping to find an opening, and when their attacks broke down through hesitancy it was up to our own attack to get moving upfield as fast as possible, shooting at goal at the slightest chance.

It took us twenty-five minutes to make our first real breakaway—but when this came it brought a goal. It went right according to plan. As an Austrian attack broke down Eddie Baily shoved the ball out to Billy Elliott on the left wing. From there a first-time pass to Jackie Sewell, from there a centre, and there was Nat Lofthouse to bang it into the net.

England line up before the game against Italy at Turin in 1948. We won 4–0.



I fail to reach the ball during a Deepdale match against Grimsby, an incident for which we were awarded a penalty.

Preston North End Junior "B" team, Deepdale, 1938.
I am on the extreme right, front row.

Following my occupation as a plumber, Preston, 1946.

Our joy lasted only one minute. Austria were awarded a penalty, for what seemed a fair shoulder charge by Jack Froggatt, and Huber made no mistake with the kick. The Austrian fans, silent as Deepdale at midnight when we got our goal, now cheered and yodelled their delight, but we silenced them by going back into the lead, again from a move straight out of our blueprint for the match.

This time Jack Froggatt started it, slipping the ball to Billy Wright as our skipper made one of his typical quick switches from defence into attack. Billy moved forward, sent a perfect through pass to Jackie Sewell, who " sold the dummy " to the entire Austrian defence before cracking in a right-foot shot which left goal-keeper Musil helpless.

Give Austria credit for fighting spirit. They came back before the interval with a desperate onslaught which paid off when centre forward Dienst burst through with a glorious run and shot. That made it 2–2, and the stage was set for the toughest forty-five minutes of football I have played in.

They hit us with everything but the Austrian Alps as they tried to smash their way through for the winner. But it came the other way, for England, and for yet the third time it was a defence-into-attack move which made the goal, seven minutes from time.

There were no frills about it. Gil Merrick sent a long ball down the middle and I nipped in and helped it on over the heads of two defenders to Nat Lofthouse, just over the half-way line. From there, Nat raced the entire defence on his own and slipped the ball past Musil as the keeper rushed out in a desperate attempt to stop the score.

Nat never saw his goal. He went down in a heap as the keeper hit him, but what a roar greeted his effort. The khaki in the crowd seemed to explode as our Servicemen greeted the goal that was to mean victory. Hats, rosettes, even the " hot dog " vendors' frankfurter sausages went up in the air as they did a dance of joy.

Nat was carried off, but great-hearted player that he is, he just refused to give up. He almost fought trainer

Jimmy Trotter to have his way, and returned to the field in a bid to get another goal—a bid that almost came off as he hit the bar with a wonderful drive just before time.

That was the end. As the final whistle went the British Tommies invaded the field to carry us off shoulder high in triumph. It may seem like self-praise to say so, but every man played his part in that prestige-boosting victory. It is a game I shall always remember with pride, and here, for the record, are the men who won it: Merrick; Ramsey, Eckersley; Wright, Froggatt, Dickinson; Finney, Sewell, Lofthouse, Baily, Elliott.

Only one section of the crowd was unmoved, one way or the other. The match was played in the Russian Zone of Vienna, but the Russians who attended had " nothing to say ". They came, they watched, and they left, and kept strict silence, despite all the excitement.

But if they were silent the English party was jubilant. In all-conquering form we flew on to Zurich, to beat Switzerland 3–0, and to earn the title of unofficial " champions of Europe ".

We were back on top.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A PRINCE'S RANSOM

THAT tour had a sensational sequel for me, for when I came home I was involved in one of the most daring transfer bids in the history of the game.

The golden offer was made to me by the Italian millionaire Prince Roberto Lanza di Trabia, and his terms made our British wages seem like car fares. . . . If I would play two seasons with Palermo F.C. I could collect a £10,000 signing-on fee, wages of £130 a month, bonuses of up to £100, a villa on the Mediterranean, a brand new Continental car, and free travel to Italy for myself, my wife, and family.

If all this seems crazy, let's go back to the setting in which the whole business started—sunny Florence during the Festival of Flowers.

At the official banquet following the Italian game I was chatting to Nat Lofthouse about the buffeting he had taken from the Italian defence, when skipper Billy Wright joined us to say that someone had asked to be introduced to me. It was the Prince in person—a famous figure in Italy because of his rank, his wealth, and his great interest in soccer as president of the Palermo, Sicily, club.

He sat down at our table and started to talk of the afternoon's match, and of football affairs in general. It was all very casual, until he came out with his catch question, "How would you like to come to Italy to play for Palermo?"

Now we English players are used to that kind of talk abroad, where conversation so easily swings to comparison of conditions, so I said, simply, "All right, if the money's right." It was the kind of answer anyone would make in the circumstances, but the Prince took

me up right away. . . . "Then perhaps we had better talk about this in private." He led me into an anteroom off the main banqueting hall, and straight away he got right down to business.

"Look. I simply must have a first-class outside right. For my money you're the man I want. How much will you take to sign for Palermo?" I told him, of course, that I didn't know, as personal transfer fees were a little out of my line, so he came straight out with his first offer. "Right. I'll give you £7,000 if you'll play for Palermo for two years."

I just stood and looked at him, it all sounded so much like a dream, but he must have taken my silence as proof that his price was too low. "All right. I'll make it £10,000, and let's get it fixed up right away." I thought of asking for twenty, hoping to scare him off—for I could see myself getting into deep water here—but he would probably have taken me at my word, so I kept quiet.

To try to end the business, however, I told him that in Britain it is illegal to approach a player direct with a transfer bid. Any offer must be made to his club. Then, even if they agreed, permission would still have to be obtained from the F.A. to allow me to play outside England. I was sorry, but that was the position, and I just could not see anything coming of it.

That did seem to be the end of it for me. It certainly sounded wonderful, but it was really impossible when you came to think it over. The Prince refused to forget about it, however. He was round at our hotel headquarters the next morning, pressing his claim, and eventually he talked me into putting the proposal before the Preston board on my return home.

And in addition to all he had previously offered me, he was ready to pay Preston substantial compensation if they would release me for two years. Failing that, he would go to £30,000 if they would transfer me outright.

Looking back now, it still seems a little hard to believe. On my first visit to Italy I was a private in the British Army, earning only a few shillings a day, and glad of the

chance to play football for nothing as a break from the mud and sweat of the war. Back in the same country some six years later, I was offered a prince's ransom for playing the same game!

But dream offer or not, Preston would have none of it. Their answer to the official request was a definite " No ". And that, despite continued negotiations by the Prince, really finished the matter.

Instead of travelling to the Mediterranean to look over the villa I had been offered, I travelled to Blackpool with my wife and children for a couple of weeks, glad of some freedom from all the fuss and worry.

The story, when it leaked out, caused a storm in Preston. One half of the public accused the club of everything short of " slavery " for refusing to let me go; the other attacked me for even having thought of leaving the town where I was born, and the club which had " made " me.

Even yet, people ask me if I would have gone had I been free to choose, and I really don't know the answer. True, it was a wonderful offer, one that will never be repeated. I could have made a fortune—but I could have put myself out of the game, certainly out of the International reckoning.

I like Preston, my home, and my friends, and it would have been no easy matter to pack up for a foreign country, where I would be playing in strange conditions and before strange crowds. Had the two-year plan been possible I might have taken the chance, but I never got as far as making a decision. I had to abide by the rules of the game.

The story of course made a perfect talking point for the Press, always interested in the vexed question of players' wages and star money.

Frankly, I am all in favour of star money being paid. Not because I am supposed to be a star myself, not because I am a money-grabber, but simply because it is the only fair approach to a player's value.

In soccer, of course, the big argument against paying star money is that even the greatest individual has to

rely on his team-mates, and that the man on a lower wage would refuse to co-operate with his highly paid colleague There is something in that argument—although not as much as you'd think when you realise that teams are all out to win. And there is another danger—if the star were getting £50 as against £14 for the others, he might in a bid to justify himself, try to do too much, with the result that team play would suffer.

Actually proof of the system is that it works in Scotland, where there is no maximum wage, but I would like to see the basic idea adjusted so that, as well as rewarding the crowd-puller, it would encourage club loyalty, too.

I would grade all players according to their ability, say into four classes—average, good, very good, and star (or International). And I would pay them a benefit according to their grade. The present £750 for the average player, rising by instalments of £250 until you get a £1,500 benefit for the star man.

To recognise club loyalty I would double the benefit at the end of the second five years qualifying period, and treble it at the end of the third. So that the star who had not exploited his ability by getting himself transferred around from club to club would get £4,500 at the end of fifteen years one-club service.

And to make everything fair and above board I would suggest that these player-gradings be registered with the Football League, and that all transfer fees be restricted according to grading. This way, it would be impossible for a club to classify a man as a £750-benefit player, and then turn round and ask a star-rating transfer fee for his services.

This system, plus an increase in big-match fees, would do much to remove the injustices from which the star player suffers. And don't kid yourself that he doesn't suffer. No other business or entertainment in the world ignores outstanding ability to the extent of refusing to reward it.

Where would all the money come from, you ask? Take a look at the transfer fees, spiralling to £30,000 and more, remember that Wembley can top the £49,000

mark in takings, and that a good "gate" can put five or six thousand pounds in a club's bank balance, and you'll see that there is plenty of cash in the game to give more to the players. And not only to the stars, to the average club men, too.

Of course to some fans, we are not worth the paying at all. According to the moaners, the standard of play is so low that we should be paying for the privilege of turning out. This type of fan could never be happy, not if his team scored six in every game, but there is still a large section of the public who think that footballers are on "easy money".

Right! Let's have a look at the pay packet of a top-class player with a First Division club, and see where it gets us: Basic wage is £14 a week in the playing season, plus bonuses of £2 a win and £1 a draw. On top of that ten per cent of his wages are put aside for him until he retires from the game, and after five years he may, not must, draw a benefit of £750. Looks all right, says you, and how can I get in on it. But let's look a little more closely.

The footballer, like everyone else, has to pay tax, even on his benefit, which is slashed to about £470 by the time he collects. Remember that I am talking only of the first-class player, the fellow in the public eye who has a position to live up to, and that his position costs money.

And remember, too, that a player's career is short, and can be ended by injury at any time; that while he is playing he has to save enough to set himself up in business for the rest of his life; that the star has usually worked for years to perfect his natural gifts . . . and you'll see that he is not the fortune-making character so many people believe him to be.

Look at the top-liners in any other sport: cricketers with their tax-free benefits, which run into thousands; golfers with big-money prize tournaments; boxers with their purses running into "telephone numbers" . . . and perhaps you'll agree that the soccer player has a long way to go before he is quite the millionaire of sport.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

MY BEST ELEVEN

I DON'T like comparisons. They lead too easily to arguments, and I'm the kind of fellow who is all for a quiet life. There is, however, one soccer comparison that makes me as ready to argue as the next man: that annual chestnut about modern soccer being on the downgrade, that the game's not as good as it used to be.

Nothing ever is, for time mellows the memory, burying failures and ensuring that only the highlights live on. No matter how great a man is, he is never as great as his legend—which is probably the reason why we hear so much rosy talk about the "good old days".

We cannot bring back the greats of other times to show their soccer paces, but while I have a great respect for the reputations of such men as Steve Bloomer, Billy Meredith, Alan Morton, Hughie Gallacher, and so on, I still say that we have men in our own times who have an equal claim to greatness.

More than that, I say that some reputations were easily made in the past, because of the poor general standard of the game. The good ones stood out, and held their team places for years longer than they would be able to do today.

For, make no mistake about it, the game is fiercely competitive now. The general standard is very high, very keen, and there are no really great gaps between top and bottom in the four leagues . . . one look at our annual shock results in the Cup proves that.

Training is taken seriously, and it takes real fitness as well as first-class ability to make the grade. You don't get players going into the "local" today before a game. In the first place the club wouldn't allow it, and in the

second the player himself would soon be on the down-grade.

Old-timers say that international caps are ten a penny nowadays—meaning, I suppose, that they are far too easy to get. But are they? It is true that with Continental fixtures and tours we play more international matches over the season, but anyone who has seen a Continental side in action will vouch for the fact that the opposition is far from easy.

We take a wider view of the game now, pitting ourselves against the best in the world instead of sticking to our own back-yard. And, because of the great competition and general rise in the standard of play, a man's international career is shorter now. No longer is it possible for a player to stay at the top until well into his forties—the game is too fast, too hard, for that.

The same goes for club football. We hear wails that there are no teams to compare with the all-conquering giants of the past—Preston, Huddersfield, Blackburn, Villa. The answer still goes, there is too much competition for it to be otherwise. The team on top of the league this season can be struggling for survival next time round unless they have sound playing resources, and put these resources to work in the finest possible way.

Newcastle's feat in winning the F.A. Cup two seasons in succession was as great, if not greater, than any club achievement before, because it was done despite tremendous opposition. We shall wait a long time before we see it repeated.

I have said that I don't like comparisons, but since they continue to be made, I'd like to join the fun for once, and name you the players, in my time since the war, whom I think good enough to challenge the best in any age.

In goal, give me the one and only Frank Swift, my idea of the perfect keeper. He was not only a great player, but a great inspiration and confidence-builder to any team.

Full-backs? On the right I would have Johnny Carey, captain of Eire and Manchester United. Johnny

land), Mercer (England); Waddell (Scotland), Taylor (Blackpool), Mortensen (England), Doherty (Ireland), Mullen (England).

No doubt that twenty years from now I shall be talking away about the good old days of my time, but meantime the two elevens I have named will do me to help prove that post-war football isn't so lacking in stars as the old-timers would have us believe.

aim is variety, both for training value and to hold interest. The players enjoy it, and play the better for their keenness.

After the manager, whose life is rarely free of some kind of worry, busiest man on the staff is the trainer, the fellow with a hundred and one jobs to take care of. First concern, of course, is the players' fitness. He has to judge each player individually and be able to gauge how much training, and of what type, each man needs.

Next is the injury problem—the greatest and most expensive worry in the game. The trainer has to know how to handle all kinds of hurts—and to get his man back into action as soon as possible. On match days he is the man with the magic sponge, that soccer cure-for-all which is hurried across the field as a player goes down injured. It is amazing what healing powers are contained in this spongeful of cold water. I have seen players go down as if poleaxed, looking as if they'd be out for the rest of the season; but one visit from the trainer, and they are roaring back into action as if they'd never even heard of an injury.

On top of all this the trainer has to help with coaching, advising the players individually and collectively on play and tactics. He has to look after the boots, seeing that they are properly studded and of the right type for the varying conditions, and he takes charge of club equipment on away trips In fact, anything you want around the club and the cry is, " Ask the trainer."

Come the first match day, and everyone is nervy and on edge. Players have to report forty-five minutes before the kick-off, to make sure that everyone is fit to play, and to avoid hold up as the crowd swarms to the ground, jamming all the traffic.

I remember one Arsenal match at Deepdale when I almost missed the boat. I was driving from my home to the ground, normally a five-minute ride, but the crowds were so great an hour before the kick-off that I had to park my car where it stood and walk the rest of the way, arriving with only fifteen minutes to spare, just as they were about to send out a search party for me.

A stranger entering a dressing-room just before kick-off time might reasonably think that he had taken the wrong turning and ended up in a hospital by mistake. There are bandages and cotton-wool on every locker, at least one massage table in the middle of the floor, a treatment room containing sun-ray lamps, heat-treatment apparatus, baths, showers, everything you could think of for the care of athletes.

But there is no machine for banishing pre-match nerves. Even the most experienced players can suffer badly, worrying themselves almost sick as they wait for the "Ready, boys" call to take the field.

In such an atmosphere superstition plays a big part in temperament, and some players go to surprising lengths to make sure that luck will be with them in the game to come . . . wearing "lucky" stockings, laces, a favourite pair of old boots—anything to give them confidence.

Others go through a strict order of routine in changing, convinced that if they do anything out of turn they will have a poor game. Others, again, insist on running on to the field in a certain place, first, third, or last as the case may be.

I must confess that although I am not normally superstitious I have my own little fads. I always tie the lace of my left boot first, and when tossing for ends before the kick-off I invariably call "Heads". Where it gets me I don't know, but I still wouldn't like to take the chance on changing.

Yet strangely all the "nerves" disappear quickly as soon as the game gets under way, returning only at half-time, when there is time to review the trend of the match.

That ten-minute interval is a busy time. Minor knocks have to be attended to, tactics reviewed—with the manager or trainer handing out praise, blame, or advice as the case (and score) may be.

Full-time is bath-time for the players, and time, too, for an informal "post-mortem" on the game, with criticism given and taken freely.

After that we have two days to ourselves if we have

escaped injury, then back to report on the Tuesday to start all over again for the next big day.

International matches, apart from the increased tension, differ very little. For games in the International Championship we usually have a training get-together for a few days to plan tactics. But the match routine is very much the same.

The teams arrive at the stadium an hour before the game is due to start, an hour that can be as long as a year if nerves get on top. Fortunately, however, there is usually a joker in the team, someone like Frank Swift, Stan Mortensen, or Bill Eckersley, who can scatter the tension by making fun of it.

The time goes in talking to friends, officials, opposition players, and in swapping autographs. Toughest time of all comes just before the kick-off, when the teams line up for presentation. When play is in progress we are not fully aware of the roar of the crowd, but standing there waiting for the match to start, the preliminary cheers sound like so many cannons going off.

Once the first whistle goes, however, football is football the world over, and the crowd soon knows if all the behind-the-scenes preparations have been worth while or not.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

BEATING THE FULL-BACKS

Good football doesn't just happen—it has to be planned and practised. There is a great deal of truth in the term " a natural footballer ", but the fellow who has not worked to perfect his natural gifts will not stay long in the top flight of soccer in these days of fierce competition.

For, no matter what the diehards say about the " good old days ", football is progressing. It is no longer an unorthodox anything-can-happen sport, but more like a large-scale and mobile game of chess—with move and counter-move made in an effort to strike a decisive blow.

The contest is close, becoming closer as the general level of play rises, so that success requires that something extra. Extra skill, extra work, a streamlined move—anything which can make a team more efficient and goal-getting on a long-term basis.

As soon as a new attacking plan is developed a new defensive system is set up to counter it, making success, both team and individual, more and more difficult.

I am frequently asked how I account for my own success by people who seem to imagine that I have some secret repertoire of soccer conjuring tricks which I can trot out at a moment's notice. Actually, there is nothing like that. If I had to give one reason for what success I have had, I'd say " Hard work "—and mean it.

I enjoy my football tremendously, and I wouldn't change it for any other career, but at the same time I treat it seriously. I don't go on to the field HOPING to beat the other fellow—in my case the full-back—I try to have some plan of HOW to beat him before the match has even started.

Ball control is a natural art, yet I have practised

The England XI photographed when in training at Brighton before the International against Italy in 1949.

Left to right : W. Watson, N. Franklin, B. Williams, B. Streten (reserve goalkeeper), A. Ramsey, and J. Aston.

Front row : Self, J. Rowley, B. Wright, S. Pearson, and J. Froggatt.

Leading Preston North End on to the field at Deepdale.

[Courtesy of the Daily Herald

At the English Colony ground at Morro Velho before the American game in June, 1950.

Frank Swift being presented to the Italian President before the England *v.* Italy game at Turin in 1948. We won 4–0, and I scored two of our goals.

over the years to perfect it. I have never believed that I know all there is to know about the game, but instead I still spend hours in training sessions trying to acquire more skill and more tricks to beat the other fellow.

Speed is, of course, the first essential to me on the wing, so I do a great deal of sprinting during training. I practise the quick dash to the ball, to get there ahead of an opponent, and I work hard at sprinting with the ball, to take me in on goal.

Straightforward running up and down the field is rarely used in football, so I try to vary my pace and direction to reproduce as far as possible the conditions of actual play. In " lapping " the track I vary my speed from the walk to the full-out sprint, and while running I practise the feint and the body swerve while going at top speed.

In practice with the ball I again vary my movements from dead slow to full ahead, first walking with the ball and trying to keep it under easy control all the time—not so easy as you might imagine, this—then building up to long runs down the touch-line and quick dashes into goal or along the bye-line, one of my favourite moves.

I am a great believer in all-together team training and practice matches—for only in these can a side's tactics and efficiency be improved, but at the same time individual work with the ball is very necessary.

One of the first maxims in socccer is " Control the ball, don't let it control you," and it is only by hours of individual effort that this can be achieved. Between sprints, shots at goal, and so on I practise feints and " selling the dummy "—pretending to move left or right, then suddenly switching balance to go the other way, taking the ball with me. I also try the feint on the move, pretending to pass or shoot, but actually not touching the ball in my first effort and finally taking another line altogether.

At all times, whether there is actual opposition in front of me or not, I aim for maximum concentration and control, and at keeping my body over the ball, another essential for good ball play.

By leaning over the ball a player forms a protective curtain which keeps it in his possession as far as anything can, ensures that it is close enough to his feet for accurate control and distribution, and gives him a strong chance of resisting a tackle.

Watch a really good ball player in action, and you'll see that the ball seems to " break " for him, that he will successfully come out of a tackle with the ball hitting his shin, knee, and so on. This is not just luck, it means that the angle of his body over the ball makes it difficult for anything but the really accurate tackle to dispossess him. And it is one of the secrets of soccer success.

The best of blackboard schemes can go woefully wrong on the field, but as far as possible I try to have some kind of plan in mind before I go into a match.

If I have played against the opposing full-back before, I try to remember any weaknesses he has, whether he is stronger on the left or right, quick on the turn, good in the air, and so on. If I haven't previously met him I try to size him up quickly—inside the first ten minutes if the run of play allows it—and plan my campaign accordingly.

As a " natural " left-footer it is a great advantage to me playing on the right. I can pick up passes from my own half without having to stop and turn too far, I can turn and pass the ball back or inside more easily when under pressure, I can cut inside more quickly, and I am usually playing away from the back's stronger foot, his left, for most left backs tend to rely more on their left foot for the tackle.

I don't believe in beating a man if I don't have to. The quick dash past or the short pass and return are fast and effective, but if I have to beat someone I try to vary my attacking methods. I don't go in " blind ", but always aim at making up my mind what I'm going to do with the ball before I've got it.

For instance, I may decide that the full-back is weak on his right side and that I have a good chance of cutting inside. I will take the ball up to him with the inside of my left foot, and then, just as I reach him, half-

turn right, but without touching the ball, so that he thinks I am going to pass him on the outside.

As he shifts his balance to follow me I quickly switch the ball to the outside of my left foot and get " off my mark " past him on the inside before he has had a chance to recover.

If the back gets wise to this move I can, of course, play it straight, that is, instead of feinting to go right I actually do so, transferring the ball to my right foot and cutting past him on the outside while he is still undecided about which way I am going to go.

Again, there is the double feint. I pretend to go right, then left, and finally go right as I have just described. There is an endless variety of moves such as this to get past a defender, but in all cases I rely on my balance, ball control, and speed off the mark to succeed. And I always believe in taking the ball close to a man if I have to beat him.

There is a good reason for this. By taking the ball up to him I may seem to run the risk of losing it in the tackle, but actually I do it to cut down his chances of recovery once I have passed him Possession is nine points of the law in soccer, and providing I can keep possession I am out to make things as difficult for the defender as I can.

If a man is beaten in a small area he usually loses vital time in turning, time which allows me to spring past and leave him " in my wake ". In other words, I cut in front of him once I'm past, so that he is further handicapped by having to run round me before trying to get in another tackle.

Once I have beaten the full-back I may have to adjust my plan according to the defensive positioning, but generally speaking I have two main courses of action.

First, if I have cut inside I can either square pass or send a short centre to a fellow, or I can go for goal on my own. Main thing is to use speed, and to keep the defence in doubt as much as possible, drawing them out of position and fooling them into going the wrong way.

Going outside gives me the chance of working my favourite move—down to and along the bye-line into

goal. As speed here is vital I have worked hard at varying my sprinting pace so that the full-back never knows when I am going full out, keeping a little in hand so that I can pull away with a final burst.

As I have explained earlier, this run along the bye-line may not seem to be a threatening position, but actually it is extremely dangerous for the defence. I can short centre the ball across the face of the goal, roll it back and out away from the defence to allow my mates to " run on to it " for a shot, or I can cut right into the goalmouth in an individual scoring effort.

Any one of these moves is hard for the defence to handle, for the slightest slip on their part can mean a goal, and it is by this method that I have " made " most of my goals for Preston and England.

In trying to explain my methods it may seem that I find it all too easy, and that I have only to approach a full-back to beat him.

I wish this were true, for actually I have to keep planning and working for new ways of winning my never-ending " war " with defenders, a struggle which I certainly don't always win. That's why I repeat that hard work is so very necessary for soccer success.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

ONE WAY TO SUCCESS

SELECTORS are supposed to have difficulty in filling the wing positions in our International teams. But if only ten per cent of the youngsters who write to me asking " How can I become a winger?" succeed in their ambition, we'll have more wingers than there are teams in the next ten or fifteen years.

I have no intention of writing a text-book on soccer, but my first answer to those young hopefuls is " Determination ". There is no quick recipe for success in anything, especially soccer. The only way to get to the top is by hard work and constant practice.

There is no point in imagining yourself as a star in any position unless you have first mastered the basic essentials of the game—how to control the ball equally well with either foot, and how to shoot, pass, trap, and head it correctly.

If you are a fair way to mastering these arts—and arts they are—then I'd say that there are four main requirements for making a success of the wing job. You must have speed, perfect " close " ball control, the ability to think quickly, and mastery of the art of centring or getting the ball across.

Speed is an absolute " must " on the wing, but by speed I don't mean the ability to sprint a hundred yards inside ten seconds. Speed off the mark is what is wanted—the sudden dash makes all the difference between getting the ball and losing it.

To acquire this ability you should train on the same lines as a sprinter, i.e., practise " starting " out of track holes, bursting straight into top speed. It will take you a long time to perfect this, but remember that the first two or three yards of a twenty-yard burst can be vital if you are racing an equally fit opponent for the ball.

When you've got the idea, switch to round-the-track work, to reproduce as far as possible the conditions you will have to face in actual play. Go along at a normal trot, then suddenly switch to a fast burst for twenty or twenty-five yards, then back to walking or trotting again.

The thing to develop is a smooth, relaxed action, saving your energy and effort for that lightning burst which is to carry you past the opposing defender. But even when sprinting, don't go all out all the time. With constant practice you can get your running to such a fine art that an opponent is never really sure when you are full out, and you have him guessing as to when you will make you final—and winning—burst.

BALL CONTROL: Many people are under the impression that a good footballer is "gifted" with this ability. Don't you believe it—without exception the skilful ball player has worked for years to attain perfection.

The young player should start by walking with the ball, when he will soon learn how quickly—even in this simple exercise—it quite easily gets out of control ahead of him. He should practise with either foot, and with the inside and outside of the foot alternately.

I can't over-emphasise the importance of being able to use "both feet". The body swerve, feinting with the ball from one foot to the other, "selling the dummy", the about turn when an opponent is advancing and you find it expedient to make a swift cross-field or back pass: none of these can be done unless you are a sound two-footed player.

After much practice at walking with the ball and keeping it well within reach and control, increase your pace and try control at a jog trot, finally varying your pace from the walk right up to the full sprint.

Never allow yourself to fall into the habit of pushing the ball too far ahead of you and running after it. That isn't nearly good enough. The ball must be kept at your feet, and you the master of it.

The best exercise I know to help you to perfect this is to place ten or a dozen sticks in a line in the ground and

about five or six yards apart. Then follow the routine—the walk, the trot, the run, and the sudden sprint, but now weaving in and out between the sticks, keeping control of the ball with your body well over it.

QUICK THINKING: This is a natural ability, and although I can perhaps help the youngster to use his head to "read" a game, neither I nor anyone else can give him the ability itself.

Try to keep on the alert at all times during a game, even if play is going on outside your own territory for some time. Try to size up your own immediate opponent as quickly as possible, and use any respite to sum up how the game has been going and how to exploit the flaws, if any, in the opposing defence. Don't stick to the obvious, but be always on the look out for openings, and learn to anticipate the run of the ball.

CENTRING AND CROSSING: This is a most important move for the winger. You should practise kicking from a standing position, as at corners. The body should be leaning slightly backwards, so as to get the necessary lift on the ball, and at the moment of impact the non-kicking foot should be a little behind the ball. This preserves balance once the kick has been made, for the kicking foot must be allowed to follow through with the line of flight to give accuracy.

Distance and height of the ball are governed by this follow-through plus, of course, the amount of power you put into the kick.

Centring on the run is made easier by the momentum of your movement and by the fact that you can get more power into the kick. But after that quick glance to judge your exact target remember the first rule in football: Keep your eye on the ball.

Personally, I am not in favour of centring overmuch, believing that in present-day soccer it is better to play the ball on the ground and to use the methods I have explained in writing of my own play to bring success.

But it is necessary to master this art—and the three others—before you can start claiming a regular place on the wing, so get to work on them right away.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

HOW TO WATCH A GAME

WHAT kind of fan are you? Do you use your Saturday afternoon to cheer for the home team, are you there to jeer at the referee, or are you one of the few and far between spectators who don't care which side wins as long as they see a good, hard-fought football match?

Unless you are in category three, it is certain that you are not getting your money's worth out of soccer, for it is amazing how few fans know what the game is all about.

It takes almost as much ability to watch soccer properly as it does to play it, which is why all big-time clubs employ a staff of scouts to tour the country on a never-ending search for soccer talent. Although they spend their time watching the game, they are not, in the strict sense, spectators, for they are paid to be able to size up a player and his effectiveness without regard to the thrills and glamour of the game itself.

It is an education to sit through a match with one of these back-room boys as he points out the strengths and weaknesses of each player and each team. He quickly sorts out the sound move from the spectacular but pointless one, and though he will perhaps watch a player many times before finally deciding if he will suit his own team's requirements it will not be long before he can give you an accurate pen picture of the "wanted" man's playing style.

I don't for a moment expect everyone who ever watches football to approach the match with such a professional and determined eye, but it is all too true that most fans miss most of what is going on out on the field.

I know that goals are what count, but it takes skill to make them—and real skill is what the spectator often fails to appreciate. It is safe to say that eighty per cent of the people who go to every game are there to watch the home team. Apart from the financial angle of it

—which is what keeps the game alive—support is a good and necessary part of the game, but how can the one-team homesters ever appreciate the game as a contest while they are there only to see their favourites?

This partisanship is so strong at times that half the crowd don't even know the rules. It is amazing how many of them can't tell the difference between a direct and indirect free kick, a deliberate foul and a fair shoulder charge, and who still cannot be convinced that a player is not off side at throw-ins or corner kicks.

Clubs, apart from giving spectators a better deal by providing covered accommodation, could help to " educate " them by using the programmes to publish the laws of the game, and by illustrating them with examples from actual matches.

There is skill to be seen in every team, so here are a few tips on how to watch a match and get more pleasure out of your Saturday afternoon.

Let's start with the goal-keeper, perhaps the one man, above all, on whom the result depends. Timing, decision, and positioning are the factors which count here. Although he may be inactive for long spells when his own side are on the attack, the keeper can never afford to take his eye off the ball for a second. He must be able to spring into action to make a save, to know when to come out and when to " stay home ", and how to position himself to narrow the target area for the forwards' shots. When the pressure is really on he must be absolute boss of his area, knowing when to clutch the ball, and when to fist or palm it to safety without wasting time.

By the very nature of the job all goal-keepers are spectacular sometimes, but watch out for the ones who make it look easy—by sound positioning and quick decision, rather than those who are diving for every shot.

Watch, too, for the keeper who plays his part in attack as well as defence. Instead of thumping goal-kicks any old how, so that they come down with " snow on them ", he will always be trying to place his clearances accurately and quickly to one of his own forwards.

Again, he can switch the game by throwing the ball to an unmarked colleague—a technique used with great

success by such top-rate keepers as Frank Swift, Ted Ditchburn, Gil Merrick, and Bert Williams. Anyone who has ever watched the Spurs knows of the close liaison between Ted Ditchburn and his right back Alf Ramsey. A throw from the keeper, a move down the wing, and a pass by the full-back—and the Spurs can have the ball in the net before the opposition has had time to re-form after the breakdown of their own attack.

Full-backs, of course, can't spend too much time on attack, but watch how they work to a defensive plan. When a winger's run ends with the ball going into touch it doesn't necessarily indicate poor control by the wing man. It usually means that he has been forced out—and away from the danger goal area—by a cleverly positioning back. And when you see the full-back heading off the line with the keeper beaten it is no accident. He has trained to position himself as a second keeper when the keeper himself is unable to cover all angles of attack.

Once an attack has broken down the good back is not the one who boots the ball anywhere over the half-way line as the quickest way out of danger. He should try to place the ball to get his own attack going with short passes to his centre half or wing halves, through the middle to the centre forward, or—perhaps the best of all—the cross-field pass to his opposite wing.

Man who comes in for most criticism in soccer is the centre half. As his first task is to mark and "stop" the opposing centre forward, he has to listen to much nonsense about being the ruination of the game by his "destructive" role.

But while it may be irritating to see your favourite centre forward end promising runs by failing to get past a "stone-waller", give the centre half credit for his skill. It takes some footballing ability to be a top player in this position—determination, quick tackling, and interception to keep the opposing leader from going dashing through on the goal trail. When one slip by the centre half can lead to a goal, it takes nerve and quick thinking in confronting the many positional switches and attacking patterns laid to beat him.

Here again, as in every position, attacks count.

To win the ball in the tackle is not enough— the really first-class pivot is the one who can pass to perfection, too.

Final men in the defensive system, but having more of a roving commission than the others, are the wing halves. Their first job, of course, is to mark the opposing inside forwards, but they have to be extremely mobile should the winger constantly have the beating of the full-back, and to keep their own attack on the go.

There are two types of wing half—the Ron Burgess type who combines sound defence with really incisive attack on his own, and the Joe Mercer type, moving around less perhaps, but every bit as effective with timely interceptions and well-placed passes to his forwards. Somewhere between the two is Billy Wright, who seems to be defending, attacking, and generalling all at once, and who really deserves his nickname, Mister Dynamo.

Next time you go to a match pay special attention to the wing halves. Every position is important, but it is the wing halves who can mould the whole course of a game by their forceful play.

Forward formations these days are as varied as the British weather, and few teams stick rigidly to the old W formation—the inside men playing behind and feeding the centre forward, with the wingers keeping to touch-lines and slinging in centres.

Variety in attack is necessary to beat the modern defensive system, so let's have a quick look along the line and see what it takes to be a class forward. Wingers I have already written about, and need add no more here, so let's switch inside to the men who have plenty of support for their claim of being the busiest men on the field, the inside forwards.

Unlike everyone else, they have three jobs to do—they have to help in defence, to lay on chances for their other forwards, and to go through for goal on their own. This is the position in which the real footballer shines, for it takes great ability to move upfield with the ball from defence, passing or working the ball past all challengers until his own side is threatening the opposing goal.

Personally I never fail to be amazed at the skill of inside forwards, and I could watch players like Raich

Carter, Wilf Mannion, and Jimmy Hagan all day without becoming bored. It is very true to say that the strength of a team is no greater than its wing halves and inside forwards, so if you really want to see where the game is won and lost keep your eye on these key men.

Centre forward is the spotlight position of the team, for he is the one man above all whose job it is to score the goals. Here, again, there are two main distinct types, the big, fast, and powerful player who relies on striking power as well as football skill to take him through, as, say, Trevor Ford does, or the smaller more stylish player, such as our own centre forward at Preston, Charlie Wayman.

Personally I prefer the ball player, and I think Charlie is the best forward of this type in the country. He has no great height or weight, but he can fool any defence with his flicks, pin-pointed short passes, and his roving to the wings. And he is high up on the list as a marksman, as his wonderful goal record shows.

No matter what type of centre is playing, though, watch how he goes about his business. How he " takes a walk " to escape the centre half, how he switches position with his inside men, or even his wingers, and how, no matter how hard the opposing side are pressing, he is always on the alert to snap up a long clearance and take the solo road to goal.

But always, no matter which team or which player you are watching, look out for good football. Speed and punch are all very well in the right place, but can be overdone. Personally, I'd rather watch two clever teams play a goalless draw than see two kick-and-rush sides reach double figures.

And if you want to get the most out of your spectating that's how it should be. Break the player's rule of " Keep your eye on the ball " and watch the men not in position. See how positional play is planned, and you'll understand how attacks are built up—or broken down.

Look at it as a complete game instead of following the immediate action, and you'll get a kick out of your soccer. For the rest—happy spectating.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

SOUTH AMERICAN AND U.S.A. TOUR, 1953

I MUST just add a postscript about the South American and U.S.A. Tour made in May and June 1953.

Naturally I was delighted to find myself amongst the party of players chosen for this very important trip. We assembled at Hendon on May 6, and departed from London Airport at ten-fifteen the next morning.

On arrival at Buenos Aires we were conveyed to our headquarters, where we had excellent training facilities and every help was afforded us by the Argentinians.

The first game was to be played on Thursday, May 14, between an F.A. XI and a Buenos Aires XI at the River Plate Stadium. We had heard and read much about the Argentinians, and several of us had played against them at Wembley in 1951, so that we were under no illusions as to their ability. Although this game was not classed as an international, there was an attendance of 100,000. It was a beautiful day, but from our players' point of view rather too hot for soccer. The playing pitch was hard and lumpy despite its green appearance.

The team was Ditchburn; Garrett, Eckersley; Wright, Barrass, Barlow; Berry, Bentley, Taylor, Froggat (R.), Froggatt (J.).

The England defence was subjected to immediate pressure and kept at full stretch for a considerable time, during which there were several narrow escapes and many brilliant saves by Ditchburn. The conditions appeared to be unsettling the English players, but much to our surprise England took the lead shortly before half-time through Taylor. The goal was neutralised very quickly by the Argentine inside left—and a brilliant goal it was, too. After half time the England goal was again under pressure. The Argentinians eventually ran out worthy winners by 3–1. It would only be fair

to point out that this was the Argentine International XI and not a Buenos Aires XI. England learned much from this game, and several changes were made for the Sunday game, which was *the* International game between England and the Argentine. The England line-up was: Merrick; Ramsey, Eckersley; Wright, Johnstone, Dickinson; Finney, Broadis, Lofthouse, Taylor, Berry.

How we longed for an English downpour, and we were naturally pleased to see a mild drizzle start as we left our headquarters for the stadium. The rain increased steadily and soon became a deluge. The game started with the ground practically waterlogged, but these conditions suited us better than our opponents, whose style is based on the short-passing game. As the game progressed it became a farce, and it was no surprise when referee Arthur Ellis—who had been brought out specially for these games—abandoned this one. It was naturally a disappointment to us, seeing that we had come so far.

We left Buenos Aires on Tuesday, May 19, and flew to Santiago, Chile.

For the game against Chile on Sunday, May 24, the local Press gave the home team an even chance of beating England. The great day arrived, and we were relieved to see that the weather was not going to be too hot. The England line-up was the same as that in the cancelled game against the Argentine.

The game opened quietly, with England taking the initiative. Both goals had narrow escapes, but half-time arrived without any score. But in the second half we had a wonderful spell of twenty minutes, during which time we scored goals through Taylor and Lofthouse, and were well on top. The Chileans were given new heart by a goal scored by their outside left, but although they attacked vigorously we held out and ran out good winners by 2–1. This was a hard game and a well-earned victory.

The English party left Santiago for Montevideo on Thursday the 27th. On arrival we were soon at work, training for our game against Uruguay on the Sunday.

The Uruguay team were, as far as we were concerned, an unknown quantity. We had never seen them play, but had heard and read much about them, and knew they were holders of the World Cup in 1950. The ground was in a perfect state, and the game commenced amid terrific excitement. England were soon attacking, and were extremely unlucky not to score. Play went from end to end, and Merrick brought off a wonderful save for England. But we were back on the attack, and inside a space of eight minutes struck a post and brought the best out of the Uruguayan keeper on two occasions and also had two very near misses. Still no score, and then the Uruguayan outside right broke away and scored a very good goal. Half-time came with the score 1–0, but we still felt we could pull the game round. Out we came at the restart of the second half, full of determination, but we were being steadily overplayed, and when they scored again the game was as good as over. The Uruguayans then treated the spectators to a fascinating display of soccer for fully twenty minutes, and should have increased their score. Their approach play was brilliant but the finishing faulty. England struck back by scoring a goal in the dying minutes, and the game finished 2–1 in favour of the Uruguayans, and rightly so. It had been a great game to play in, and victory went to the better side.

On Monday, June 1, whilst still in Montevideo we learned of the death of my first idol in soccer, Alex James, and we were all very distressed to hear of his passing away after a long illness. Our party left the same afternoon for New York, where we were to meet the United States. We were due to play at the Yankee Stadium on Sunday, June 7, but owing to rain the ground was declared unfit. So the game was fixed for the following evening, to be played under floodlight, which was something entirely new for the English International team. Although the U.S.A. team had players of British League experience, they never really measured up to International standard, but it took us some time to score our first goal just before half-time. The second

half was a different story, and we were soon in complete command, during which time two goals were scored, by Nat Lofthouse and myself. The Yanks fought back to score a goal, but a minute later Lofthouse scored again, to put England into a comfortable lead. However, four minutes after, much to everyone's astonishment, the referee awarded a penalty against Johnstone for hands, which they converted, and for good measure the Americans scored their third goal three minutes later. Then England took command again, and I scored our fifth goal; ten minutes from the end Redfern Froggatt made it 6–3 for England, and thus the game finished.

Since I arrived home from the tour I have been asked many times if the South American teams are as good as they are reported to be. Generally speaking I would say " yes ". The main difference in their style of play compared with our own is their short-passing game. The passing is amazingly accurate and speedy; most players are exceedingly good in ball control and are adept at positional play. Also, their players are extremely fit. Whilst they train for some months in preparation for International games, our players had just terminated a strenuous season's football. I am not making excuses for our defeats, because I consider that the South American teams are comparable with the best.

In conclusion, I would say that the Uruguayans were the best team we opposed, and that the experience gained from the tour should be valuable to England in the next World Cup series in Switzerland in 1954.